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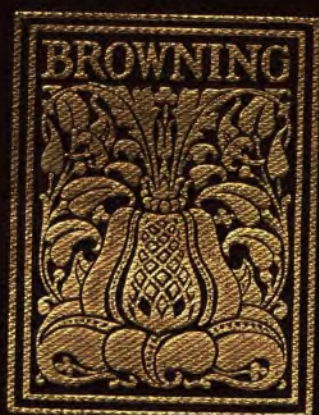
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BROWNING STUDY PROGRAMMES



STUDY PROGRAMMES

BY
CHARLOTTE PORTER
AND
HELEN A. CLARKE

VOL. I



THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO
NEW-YORK AND BOSTON

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Browning

Study Programmes

By

Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke

“ 'T is the poet speaks :
But if I, too, should try and speak at times,
Leading your love to where my love, perchance,
Climbed earlier, found a nest before you knew —
Why, bear with the poor climber, for love's sake ! ”
Balaustion's Adventure, lines 343-347.

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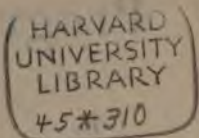
First Series

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Preface

THERE are now, perhaps always will be, two camps in which many of the readers of poetry intrench themselves. One hedges itself about with walls of opposition to the study of poetry, maintaining that the poet is his own best interpreter. The other combats the opposition, by slow siege as it were, not claiming, indeed, that the poet is not his own best interpreter, but contending constantly that other means of approach to him sorely need to be employed.

The writers of this book, intended to be a contribution toward the building up of poetic appreciation, think it only fair to confess that they do not belong, as active combatants, to either of these hostile camps, for the simple reason that they see no sufficient cause for warfare. If neither camp would attempt to coerce the other, each could the more wisely follow its own bent; or — it is barely possible — find a firm ground of reconciliation.

In the first camp many of the true lovers of poetry rally, whose æsthetic appreciation is spontaneous, and whose delight in verse as an art

is inborn; in the second, many of the lovers of poetry, for the sake of what it illumines ethically or historically, are gathered. And with these who care supremely for poetry as an art and for its appreciation as an inborn sense; and with those who care for the ethical and historical implications of poetry and who hold, moreover, that the conscious cultivation of the instinctive sense of verse as an art pays because it reveals new beauty, gives deeper pleasure,—the writers confess, once more, that they have no quarrel. Rather do they feel with the one set of disputants the closest bonds of kinship, and with the ideals of the other the warmest sympathy.

The aim they have set themselves is the friendly and pacific office of helping those only who desire such suggestions as they offer here, and to help them in such a way that they may help themselves the better to the bounty the poet supplies.

This book is based, therefore, as to its general design, in its classifications, its "Topics," "Hints," and "Queries for Discussion," on the gradual unfolding of the matter the poems contain, all or very nearly all of Browning's poems being woven into its plan.

Beginning with the slighter and more obvious poems, and with suggestions upon them, accordingly, which are often, perhaps, more obvious than some readers will need, but which others, especially young readers or those new to

Browning, may possibly require,—the programmes proceed thence to the less simple poems, and follow them on with suggestions also growing less simple, partly by reason of the complex subjects, and partly because it is intended to help the reader less and less. Having learned how to go on freely in the path opened out to him, it is supposed that he will not require so many hints, but be able to pass on without continuous guidance, yet without neglecting to notice all the steps in the processes of poetic construction, which are pointed out with less detail or overleaped altogether in the Second Series of Programmes.

The general order throughout is chronological, so far as this is consistent with the consideration, for the most part, of the easier and less involved poems to begin with, and concluding with poems more complicated or admitting of wider classifications or more abstract generalizations.

Discussions of moot-questions indirectly growing out of the subject-matter are intended to follow study of the work itself, as this is the nucleus whence they are derived and should receive first attention.

The cardinal principle of the whole plan is that all deductions, æsthetic, critical, ethical, however personal impression and point of view may color them, should be based on thorough acquaintance with what actually is in the poems,

instead of on what is off-hand assumed to be in them. Most poets have suffered from such assumptions, repeated till they were taken for granted, and have thence been compelled to bear fault-finding and misunderstanding or praise and glozing, as the case might be, all equally built on breath. Browning has suffered peculiarly, and especially as an artist, from this sort of inaccurate observation or inattention to just what is in his work and just how and in what relation it is expressed.

Mere analysis, it is held, is not exact observation. Synthetic relation of all the parts of any work of art are necessary merely to its perception. Neither will one or two such perceptions tell a straight story. Correlation of the characteristics of a poet's work and method is the only fit foundation for genuine appreciation or criticism.

Those happily constituted persons who at a glance are really able to set themselves in sufficiently close accord with poets of various genius to get out of their work all there is in it of beauty and significance, are clearly best off alone. Who can be justified in quarrelling with their light-winged happiness?

Others, better off with helpful fellowship, are as clearly justified in less lonely appreciation of the ways of genius with mankind. And these may find clew, or stimulation, or merely the trusty staff of orderly arrangement supplied

them in this attempt to direct, by suggestive outlines, their steadfast scrutiny upon the whole body of Browning's work. To them the patient brooding of the alert and inquiring yet docile intelligence may be the means of opening out half-unsuspected traits of beauty and significance,—a work of art rewarding intimate attention as a work of nature does when it yields up its lurking loveliness to the steady eye of the painter bent on discerning it in its integrity and symmetry.

Boston, November 3, 1899.

1870

The first of the year was a very cold one, and the weather was very disagreeable. The snow was very deep, and the wind was very strong. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged.

The second of the year was a very cold one, and the weather was very disagreeable. The snow was very deep, and the wind was very strong. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged.

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The fourth of the year was a very cold one, and the weather was very disagreeable. The snow was very deep, and the wind was very strong. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged.

The fifth of the year was a very cold one, and the weather was very disagreeable. The snow was very deep, and the wind was very strong. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged.

The sixth of the year was a very cold one, and the weather was very disagreeable. The snow was very deep, and the wind was very strong. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged. The people were very much distressed, and the crops were very much damaged.

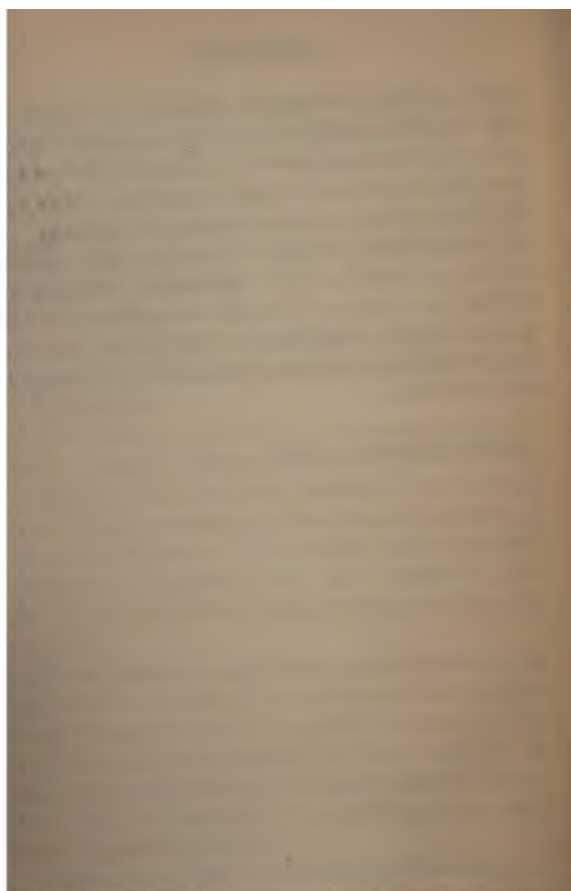
General Introduction

What were life
Did soul stand still therein, forego her strife
Through the ambiguous Present to the goal
Of some all-reconciling Future ?

PARLEYINGS : WITH GERARD DE LAIRFSSE.

THE poetic motive informing Browning's work is, in one word, aspiration, which moulds and develops the varied and complex personalities of the humanity he depicts, as the persistent energy of the scientist, holding its never-wearying way, gives to the world of phenomena its infinite array of shows and shapes. Aspiration — a reaching on and upwards — is the primal energy underneath that law which we call progress. Through aspiration, ideals — social, religious, artistic — are formed; and through it ideals perish, as it breaks away from them to seek more complete realizations of truth. Aspiration, therefore, has its negative as well as its positive side. While it ever urges the human soul to love and achievement, through its very persistence the soul learns that the perfect flowering of its rare imaginings is not possible of attainment in this life.

Assurance of the ultimate fulfilment of the ideal is one of the forms in which Browning unfolds the workings of this life principle, well illustrated in "Abt Vogler," who has implicit faith in his own intuitions of a final harmony; or in those poems where the crowning of aspiration in a supreme earthly love flashes upon the understanding a clear vision of infinite love. But by far



Guest:

1. *Thymus* *sp.*
 2. *Thymus* *sp.*
 3. *Thymus* *sp.*

[illegible]

... of the German is, where the
 of the the people, and
 who has simple sense of
 harmony: we do not get
 together in a common
 understanding, a common

the larger number of poems discloses the unde force at work in ways more subtle and obscure, the conflict of good and evil, of lower with higher, either as emphasized in great social movements, struggle between individuals, or in struggles fought on the battle-ground within every human soul.

With a motive so all-inclusive, the whole panoramic human life, with its loves and hates, its strivings and failures, its half-reasonings and beguiling sophistries, material ready at hand for illustration. Browning inspired with a democratic inclusiveness, allowed his choice in subject-matter to range through fields both new and old, unploughed by any poet before him. Progress, to be imaged forth in its entirety, must be interpreted, not only through the individual soul, but through the collective soul of the human race; wherefore many phases of civilization and many attitudes of mind must be detailed for service. There is no choosing a subject, as a Tennyson might, on the ground that it will best point the moral of a preconceived theory of life; on the contrary, every such theory is bound to be of interest as one of the phenomena exhibited by the transcending principle.

From first to last Browning portrayed life either developing or at some crucial moment, the outcome of past development, or the determinative influence for future growth or decay.

His interest in the phenomena of life as a whole, freed him from the trammels of any literary cult. He steps out from under the yoke of the classicist, where only gods and heroes have leave to breathe; and, equally, from that of the romanticist, where kings and persons of quality alone flourish. Wherever he found latent possibilities of character, which might be made to expand under the glare of his brilliant imagination, whether in hero, king, or knave, that being he chose to set before his readers as a living individuality to show whereof he was made, either through his own ruminations or through the force of circumstances.

Upon examination it will be found that the sources, many and various, of Browning's subject-matter are broadly divisible into subjects derived from history, from personal experience or biography, from true incidents, popular legend, the classics, and from his own fertile imagination. Of these, history proper furnishes the smallest proportion. "Strafford" and "King Victor and King Charles" are his only historical dramas, and with "Sordello," and a few stray short poems, based on historical incidents and persons, exhaust his drafts upon history. Several more have a historical setting with fictitious plot and typically historic characters, such as the "Return of the Druses" and "Luria;" and still more have a historical atmosphere in which think and move creatures of his own fancy, such as "My Last Duchess," "Count Gismond," "In a Gondola." His most important work, "The Ring and the Book," is founded on the true story of a Roman murder case. Others of his longer poems, developed from real occurrences, are "The Inn Album," "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country," "Ivàn Ivànovitch," and some shorter poems. The individual living to develop the mind stuff of the world rather than the individual playing a part in action, attracted Browning, and we find a large percentage of his subjects — between twenty and thirty poems — to be dramatic presentations of characters not distinguished for their part in the history of action, but who have played a part more or less prominent in the history of thought or art. Such are "Paracelsus," "Saul," "Abt Vogler," "Fra Lippo Lippi." Sometimes they appear in the disguise of a name not their own, as in "Bishop Blougram," for whom Cardinal Wiseman sat, "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau" — Napoleon, Mr. Sludge — Home, the Spiritualist. "The Pied Piper" and "Gold Hair" are familiar examples of legendary subjects. Greece is drawn upon in the translation from the Greek of "Agamemnon," to which must be added "Balaustion's Adventure" and "Aristophanes' Apology," both of

which contain transcripts from Euripides ; also "Echelos," "Pheidippides," "Artemis Prologizes," and "Ixion." There should furthermore be mentioned a few poems which grew out of suggestions furnished by poetry, music, and art, as "Cenciaja," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," "The Guardian Angel." And last, out of the pure stuff of imagination, have been fashioned some of his most lifelike characters. Sometimes, as already stated, they move in an actual historical environment, sometimes merely in an atmosphere of history, and sometimes, detached from time and place, is pictured a human soul struggling with a passion universal to mankind.

This vast range of material is not by any means chosen by the poet at random. There are several centres of human thought, around which the genius of Browning plays with exceptional power. Such, for example, are the ideas symbolized in human love and service, in art, and in the Incarnation.

Clustering about the instinct of human love, gathers thickest a maze of poems bearing witness to the force, sweetness, and versatility of Browning's treatment of the purely personal emotions. The scope sweeps from primitive to consummate types, as if none conceivable were to be tabooed, or as if Aprile's desire, the poet in "Paracelsus," had been Browning's own.

"Every passion sprung from man, conceived by man,
Would I express and clothe in its right form,
. . . No thought which ever stirred
A human breast should be untold ; all passions,
All soft emotions, from the turbulent stir
Within a heart fed with desires like mine,
To the last comfort shutting the tired lids
Of him who sleeps the sultry noon away
Beneath the tent-tree by the wayside well."

Yet the unifying current is clear through all differentiations, because it is based on the vital fact of the psychical

origin of the emotion of love as desire, and capable, therefore, of a never-ending tendency to impel and reveal the highest potency of each individual soul. The conditions under which it acts may be favorable or not, the outgoing love may be satisfied or not, by eliciting and enjoying love in return; in any case, the test is equally good to make a soul declare itself — "to wit, by its fruit, the thing it does," and thus, through living out its own life, to recruit both the general plan of the race and its own individual possibilities.

The psychical value, of which the commonest instinct towards love, in any and every human creature, is capable, relates all men to each other, and, pointing out the implicit use of each to each, permits none to be scorned as having no part in the scheme, nor any to be denied the vision of some dim descried glory "ever on before." It constitutes a revelation to every man of the Infinite, incarnate within his own grasp and proof, — a miracle only to be felt, differing in this from any attempt to achieve the Absolute through act or deed or any product of effort outside oneself, one instant of human consciousness enabling the laying hold on eternity.

Some of these poems represent the instinct of love astir in modes that foster the transmutation of desire into force, no matter what obstacles beset it; in others egotism and conventionality chill and obstruct its saving rule, although its way be smooth. The merely selfish expression of the common instinct is depicted in "The Laboratory" and "My Last Duchess;" the unselfish, in "One Way of Love." Its seeing faculty appears in "Cristina" and "The Last Ride Together;" but its eyes are sealed until too late in "The Confessional," and in Constance in "In a Balcony." It finds itself expressed in a conventionalized way in "Numpholeptos;" in a realistic way in "Poetics." It is revealed in "Count Gismond" as a rudimentary relation between husband and wife; as ripe in "By the Fireside." It is stifled in "Bifurcation," "The Statue and the Bust,"

"Youth and Art," "Dis Aliter Visum;" it is self-baffled in "A Forgiveness" and "In a Balcony;" but has sway despite Death in "Prospice" and "Never the Time and the Place." All these separate ways of love are glimpses at parts of human experience, which, since they can be correlated, illumine the course of growth latent for any soul in a crisis of emotion. Other poems still exemplify this by correlating various stages of development occurring in the experience of one person, the original manifestation of love adding to itself a new psychical value, as in "James Lee's Wife."

Taken as a whole, Browning's broad and vital representations of love reveal the related values of different phases of personal experience and of each personal experience to every other; and, also, the bearing of each and all such experiences on human progress and on an ecstatic consciousness of the Infinite.

In the manifestations of human energy commonly called social, corresponding orbits of relative values are brought to light by Browning through his reconstruction from life itself of numerous varying types of work and consequent service to humanity at large. The range exemplified includes the exercise of his art by a Fra Lippo Lippi, an Abt Vogler, or a Cleon, the devotion to his study of a Grammarian or the public achievement of a Pheidippides, a Hervé Riel, a Pym, a Strafford, or a Luria. Browning shows a consciousness of the special influence of certain historic periods of civic enthusiasm on the development of social ideals. The grim righteousness of Pym's London, the glories of Athens and of Florence, are fitly celebrated. And in the whole pioneer period which sowed the seed and set the shape of much that is not yet ripe for fulfilment in modern civilization—in the period of the Italian Renaissance, Browning's imaginative conception found frame and flesh. In "Sordello" he described the incipient democratic tendencies of that period, anticipating the conclusions of its special historians: of Burckhardt, who characterized it as "the

awakening of the individual in love with his own possibilities ;" of Vernon Lee, who describes it as "the movement for mediæval democratic progress ;" of Symonds, who speaks of it as "the persistent effort after liberty of the unconquerable soul of man." Browning embodies it, in the period that prepared the way for the Renaissance, in the consciousness of his hero, the warrior-poet Sordello, as the dawn and struggle for supremacy of the democratic ideal.

About the Renaissance crystallized an important group of Browning's art poems.

"Pictor Ignotus" shows us the personality of the typical, often unknown monastic painter of the Renaissance period, the nature of his beautiful but cold art, and the conditions of servitude to ecclesiastical beliefs and ideals which shaped both personality and art. Fra Lippo exhibits the irresistible tendency of the art impulse to expand beyond bounds either of the church or of set laws of art, and finding beauty wheresoever in life it chooses to turn the light of its gaze. The Bishop who ordered his tomb at St. Praxed's, stands for somewhat more than the typical art-patronizing priest, whose connoisseurship, strong in death, serves his vanity, worldliness, and envy. He gathers up in his person the pagan survivals, the normal grossness, the assumption of authority, which were the ecclesiastical and aristocratic clogs that dragged back the forward-tending and freedom-seeking Renaissance movement. "Old Pictures in Florence" shows more explicitly the relation to historic periods of various new art impulses working themselves out in schools; the indebtedness of each to each; and the onflowing movement belonging to all collectively. At the same time is emphasized the supreme importance to the world of assimilating the work of the pioneering artists, from whom their successors derive vitality. There is also no mistaking the expression in favor of free democratic conditions which conduce to "art's best birth." So, throughout these poems, manifesting Browning's universal enthusiasm

for all varieties of art, the relativity and unity of all art expression is shown to be perfectly reconcilable with the independent worth of the special exponent of the art of his time ; and the development both of art and the artist is shown to be dependent on the free play and unrelenting aspiration of his powers.

Not less sympathetic is Browning's understanding of art as wrought out in music, though in his musical poems the historical atmosphere is not so prominent as it is in the art poems. They dwell upon the different attitudes taken toward music as the result of differences in temperament, rather than upon any distinct phases of musical growth. His chief musicians, — David, Abt Vogler, Hugues, and the organist who performs his mountainous fugues, Galuppi and the man who plays his toccata, the husband in "Fifine at the Fair," and the musical critic of "Charles Avison," — all see different possibilities in music. David is more the poet than the musician, since, when he reaches his highest point of inspiration, he throws his harp aside and depends entirely upon language for his effect. He uses music primarily as an awakener — through the familiarity of the tunes he sings to Saul — of long-forgotten memories, along with which comes the renewal of early emotions, — an effect of music often observed and used to good purpose in arousing soldiers to patriotism, through melodies that awaken memories of home and childhood. David, casting aside his harp, when filled with the intense desire of adequate expression, is the exact antipode of the husband in "Fifine at the Fair," who feels that the most complete expression is only possible by means of music. This opinion, however, is somewhat discounted by the character of the man, sophisticated as he often is in his arguments. When he finds himself pushed for logical reasons for his moral conduct, he falls back upon music, by means of which he could make all plain to his wife if she only understood its language. His dependence upon music as a revealer of the truth is based on the ground that it gives form to

feeling, and is equivalent to his founding his arguments on feeling. That to reflect moods of feeling is among the highest offices of music is doubtless true, but to formulate theories of moral conduct upon this fact is sophistical in the highest degree, for the all-sufficient reason that music may reflect a mood the opposite of aspiring. The critic in "Charles Avison" recognizes to the full the limitations of music. Though it gives form to feeling, with the passage of time the form becomes obsolete, and the feeling once expressed is no longer discernible through it. An understanding of its mood can then be gained only by recourse to the historical sense, reconstructing the time that gave it birth, and by this means obtaining a glimpse of the mood that inspired it. Thus, music furnishes to Browning another illustration of the relativity of art form, of its failure — as of every effort of man — to touch perfection, though, none the less, the record of man's effort to give adequate expression to his aspirations.

"A Toccata of Galuppi" furnishes a fine illustration of the exercise of the historical sense on the part of the person who plays the toccata in conjuring up a lifelike picture of the pleasure-loving Venice, whose heartlessness re-lives for him in the dreary harmonies of Galuppi's music. The organist in "Master Hugues" is not blessed with any such historical sense, and he is therefore incapable of penetrating within the outer crust of the fugue. On the other hand, the fugue, as well as the toccata, are both examples of music which is less the outcome of aspiration than an intellectual playing with forms for form's sake, and as such furnish a warrant for the delicious humor which Browning expends on them.

In "Abt Vogler," Browning has represented music from the point of view of the man who has, so to speak, fathomed the heart of the mystery. He has none of the misgivings of the critic. Like the man in "Fifine," he, too, regards music as the most complete means of ex-

pression ; but it is more to him than the mere reflection of earthly emotions, — it is the incarnation of the wish of his soul to be in touch with the Infinite. His purer spirit feels the revelation in the inspired effort to image in entirely beautiful form the strivings upward of the soul, and in a form, moreover, which is itself evolved out of the soul. Aspiration becomes, as it were, flesh and blood ; is not indirectly expressed by means of symbols as in the arts of painting and poetry. So much is the form identified with the spirit in the Abbé's mind, that he thinks of his music winging its way up to God, an eternal good, to take its place in the completed round of everlasting beauty. He, indeed, is just the needed supplement to the critic, in "Charles Avison," who perhaps is not sufficiently alive to the fact that a new beauty does not necessarily exclude the old.

Though the importance of these poems is chiefly due to their bringing out the various functions which music may perform for different individuals, there is a historical element of considerable interest. David's use of music is quite in keeping with an age that had not altogether learned to regard music other than as a handmaid to poetry. In Hugues, there is certainly pictured the revolt against the overlearned amplifications indulged in by the old contrapuntal writers, which was triumphantly led by Palestrina. An epoch of musical decay breathes through the "Toccata," which belongs to the period of the decline of the Italian influence in music, justly following upon a worn-out inspiration, to give place to the glories of the pre-eminent German school ; while Abt Vogler is fired with the enthusiasm of a period when music, its shackles of the past rent asunder, had in the romantic school entered upon a long triumphant march of development.

Browning's portraits of poets and poems illustrating in diverse ways various principles of poetic art naturally ally themselves to the groups of poems on the fine arts just considered. His early devotion to Shelley, expressed in

"Pauline," was succeeded in "Paracelsus" by an imaginary representation of a poet, Aprile, who, like Shelley, was the impersonation of spiritual love and human ardor. In "Sordello" this fervent poetic type, which yearns to bury itself in what it worships, again appears. It is now contrasted and merged with a new self-centred type of poet which holds its own consciousness aloof from its dreams, yet finds no dream or function of life without as good a counterpart within itself. The distinction here made between what is called the subjective poet, such a one as Shelley, and the objective or dramatic poet, such a one as Shakespeare, recurs in the prose essay on Shelley, and some variety of one or the other or hoped-for blending of both types animates all his impersonations of poets. Eglamor in "Sordello" is a bardling of limited possibilities who is ennobled by his devotion to his art. In "The Glove" Ronsard and Marot are incidentally characterized and contrasted to the advantage of the poet more deeply versed both in lore and life. Keats appears in "Popularity" as a poet dowering the world and many imitators with a beauty never seen before. Shelley again has a tribute of personal love in "Memorabilia." Euripides and Aristophanes owe to Browning, in "Balaustion's Adventure" and "Aristophanes' Apology," the deepest appreciation and soundest criticism they have ever received at any one man's hands.

Shakespeare is directly defended, in "At the 'Mermaid,'" from charges of pessimism, derision of women, and uneasy ambition to figure in court life, — charges more or less involved in some modern conceptions of him based on an autobiographical reading of the Sonnets and Plays. The sonnet theory is again directly combated in "House;" and "Shop" may perhaps be taken as falling in with these two. Both "At the 'Mermaid'" and "House" rest on a conception of Shakespeare as belonging altogether to the objective type of poet. And the *Shakespeare Sonnet*, "The Names," is in accord with

a view which accepts him as the supreme dramatic creator.

In the verses beginning "Touch him ne'er so lightly," Browning sings the way of pain and obstacle through which pass the master poets who sum up great epochs of national life—such a poet as Dante—and who transmute the bitterness of sorrow into the splendor of song.

Expressions concerning the philosophy of the poet's art and self-development are to be found in "Sordello," "The Ring and the Book," and the "Parleying with Christopher Smart." In "Transcendentalism" and "How it Strikes a Contemporary" are celebrated the vitality of the poet's gift, the keenness of the poet's sight, the warmth and humanity of his heart and office. The whole range of his work on poetic art is in accord in placing the poet somewhat less within the influence of the historic times to which he is related, than the artist or even the musician. The poet's fortune is read aright for more than one age, if not for all time, in his intimate and loving kinships with humanity, his clear oversight and deep insight upon the springs of life and progress, in the dependency of his artistic power on his truth to his own highest energies and aspiration.

The most exalted ideal towards which the human soul aspires is that of divine love, and this, as symbolized in the idea of the Incarnation, Browning has presented from every side. Even in so humble a thinker as Caliban, the germ of religious aspiration is discernible in his conception of a God above Setebos who, if not very positive in his possession of good qualities, is at least negative so far as bad ones are concerned.

Browning's work is rich in poems which revolve about this central idea. In David, the intensity of his human love exalts his conception of God from that of power into that of love, and with prophetic vision he sees the future attainment of a religious ideal in which love like unto human love shall have a place. What a powerful force this longing is in the human mind is again illustrated in

Cleon, the cultured Greek who, despite his broad sympathies and deep appreciation of all forms of beauty, feels that life is not capable of affording a realization of joy such as the soul sees. Like Saul, an immortality of deed has no attractions for him; it is the assurance of a continuing personality that he wants. Karshish, the Arab, too, is haunted by the idea of a God who is love; but neither in him nor in Cleon has the aspiration reached such a point that they are enabled to conceive of the ideal as actual, though living at the time of Christ. In "A Death in the Desert" is presented the portrait of one who has seen the ideal incarnate.

Other phases of doubt and faith are pictured as affected by more sophisticated stages of culture. While Cleon and Karshish belong to a phase of development wherein the mind has not fully grasped the possibilities of such a conception, a Bishop Blougram's doubts grow out of the uncertainties of the nature of proof. Far from being sure, like David, that the incarnation will become a veritable truth, he can only hope that it may have been true, and resolve to act as if he believed it were. Still another phase of doubt is shown in "Ferishtah's Fancies," where the belief in an actual incarnation is scouted by an Oriental as preposterous.

The assurance of divine love does not come to all of Browning's characters through a belief in external revelation. For instance, in the Epilogue to "Dramatis Personæ," and in "Fears and Scruples," it is through the experiencing of human love alone, reaching out toward God, which carries the conviction that there must be a God of love to receive it, though he may never have manifested himself in the flesh. In "Ferishtah's Fancies," again, Ferishtah, who sternly reprimands the unbeliever already mentioned, seems to regard the ideal of an actual incarnation as a human conception, but, nevertheless, doing duty as a symbol of the Divine, and thus helping men to approach the Infinite.

In giving a sketch of the general motive and content

of Browning's work, we have treated it as essentially dramatic. It is to be noted, however, that he has carried his observations of the realities of life into regions never approached by any other poet, — that is, into the thoughts and motives of humanity, the very sources of world movements, — with the result that we do not see his characters in action so much as in the intellectual fermentation, which is not merely the concomitant but the initiation of action. This fact, namely, that his imagination invests the subjective side of man's life with vitality, sets up a certain spiritual kinship between the poet and his characters, and justifies the search for a philosophy which may be styled Browning's own; yet, that any such search must be conducted with the utmost discretion is evidenced by the existence of many diversities in opinion upon this subject. It is dangerous to regard each poem as a mask from behind which Browning in his own person peeps forth; for the more one studies his creations, the more the peculiar individualisms of their natures assert themselves, and the more the poet retires into the background. Even admitting that there are certain religious and philosophical ideas upon which many of his *dramatis personæ* dwell, each one presents them from his own point of view, and in a form of expression suited to the particular character and circumstance. Moreover, the ever-recurring idea in new modes of expression is absolutely true to the life of thought in the world. It is no more surprising that David, Rabbi Ben Ezra, the husband in "Fifine at the Fair," and Paracelsus should have some points of philosophy in common, than that the wits of Plato, Buddha, Herbert Spencer, and the North American Indians should occasionally jump together. We have seen how he discriminates against no form of doubt or faith by allowing every shade of opinion to be presented from the standpoint of one who holds it. This is external evidence of his friendliness toward all forms of effort that indicate a search for *the truth*. With which particular phase of truth the

poet himself is to be identified, it would be difficult to discover, but it is not so impossible to deduce general principles; not only from the fact that aspiration is plainly the informing spirit of his work, but because from time to time this informing spirit forces itself to the surface in an expression avowedly the poet's own. From such expressions, of which the third division of the "Epilogue" to "Dramatis Personæ," "Reverie" in "Asolando," passages in "Paracelsus," "Sordello," and "Ferishtah's Fancies" are examples, together with the whole trend of his work, his philosophy, broadly speaking, may be described as based upon the revelation of divine love in every human being, through experience of love reaching out toward an object which shall completely satisfy aspiration. The partial manifestations of love include the feeling of gratitude awakened through the enjoyment of benefits received, like that felt by Ferishtah when he eats a cherry for breakfast; the creative impulse, yearning to all-express itself in art; love seeking its human complement; and love seeking expression in service to humanity. Moral failure, resulting in evil; intellectual failure, resulting in ignorance, are simply the necessary means for the further development of the soul, and the continuance of the law of progress. While the revelation of God is thus entirely subjective, his conception of God is both subjective and objective. Looking forth upon the world, he sees Power and Law exemplified; looking within himself, he sees Power and Law manifested as Love. God, then, must be both Power and Love, as Rabbi Ben Ezra discovered, and with this dramatic expression may be paralleled the subjective expression of the same conclusion in "Reverie," — the poet's last piece of profound philosophizing.

The faculty for twofold gaze within and without, on which Browning's reconciliation of Power and Love is built, has enabled him to effect a like reconciliation between *Power in Art* — the ability to appropriate and project

into form large swaths of fresh and living material — and Love in Art — the ardor to charge and energize the whole with spiritual attractiveness and meaning.

The analytic tendency, for which he is often censured, does not control, it subserves a much more noticeable faculty for synthesis — for seeing and reproducing wholes.

Another unusually happy balance of capabilities distinguishes Browning. The moral interests which weight his work with significance are lightened with an over-play of humor — a product of his double vision. With what genial facility he enters, for example, into Baldinucci's simple old man's nature, and lends the poet-wit to the exquisite clumsiness of his joke against the Jews; and then again, with what easy-going, wide-sweeping sympathy he enters into the complex course of law and custom which turns the laugh on Baldinucci, after all. So, in this, as in many another such dramatic picture of poor old human nature, the moral lesson is itself made dramatic.

Lend Browning but a little consideration, and the opulence of his effects will convince you that these two-fold counterpoised faculties have found way in the sort of art which embodies them, because that alone was large enough to befit them. Lyric, idyl, tale, fantasy, and philosophic imagining are enclosed in the all-embracing dramatic frame.

His artistic invention, moreover, working within the dramatic sphere, expended itself in perfecting a poetical form peculiarly his own, — the monologue.

His monologues range from expressions of mood as simple as in the song, "Nay, but you, who do not love her," to those in which not only the complex feelings of the speaker are expressed, but complete pictures of a second and sometimes a third character are given; or even groups of characters as in "Fra Lippo Lippi," where the curious, alert Florentine guards are not all portrayed with equal clearness, but are all made to emerge

effectively in a picturesque knot, showing here a hang-dog face, and there a twinkling eye, or a brawny arm elbowing a neighbor. By dexterous weaving in of allusions, flashes of light are turned upon events and feelings of the past, so adding harmonious depths to the general effect.

His diction is noticeable in that he uses a large proportion of Saxon words, and, by so doing, gives a lifelike naturalness to his speech, especially in his shorter poems, in which his characters do not talk as if they were confined within metrical limits, but seemingly as if the unstilted ways of daily life were open to them. Yet in all this apparently natural flow of words, there is a harmony of rhythm, a recurring stress of rhyme, and a condensation of thought that produce an effect of consummate art, frequently enhanced by a subtle symbolism underlying the words. How simple in its mere external form is the little poem "Appearances"! Two momentary scenes, a few words to each, yet there have been laid bare the worldly, ambitious heart of one person and the true heart of another, disappointed by the shattering of his idol; and under all, symbolically, a universal truth.

The obscurity with which Browning has been taxed so often is largely due to his monologue form. It is apt to be confusing at first, mainly because nothing like it has been met with before. The mind must be on the alert to catch the power of every word, to see its individual force and its relational force. Nothing, neither a scene nor an event, is described outright. Only in the course of the talk, references to events and scenes are made a part of the very warp and woof of the poem, and woven in with such skilfulness by the poet that the entire scene or event may be reconstructed by those who have eyes to see.

A harmonizing of imagery and of rhythm and even rhyme with the subject in hand is a marked characteristic of Browning's verse.

In the poems "Meeting at Night" and "Parting at Morning," the wave motion of the sea is indicated in

the form, not only by the arrangement of the rhymes to form a climax by bringing a couplet in the middle of the stanza like the crest of the wave, but the thought, also, gathers to a climax midway in the stanzas, and subsides toward their close.

The measure of "Pheidippides" is a mixture of dactyls and spondees, original with the poet, with a pause at the end of each line, which reflects the firm-set eager purpose of the patriotic Greek runner and the breath-obstructed rhythm of his bounding flight.

In "James Lee's Wife," the metre is changed in each lyric to chime in with the changing mood dictating each one; and the imagery is in general chosen to mate every aspect of the thought dominating each mood. For example, in the second section, called "By the Fireside," the fire of shipwreck wood is the metaphor made to yield the mood of the brooding wife a mould which takes the cast of every sudden turn and cranny of her ill-foreboding reverie.

In the grotesque, frequently double rhymes, and the rough rhythm of "The Flight of the Duchess," the bluff, blunt manner of the huntsman who tells the story is conveyed. The subtle change that passes over the spirit of the tale as the rhythm falls tranquilly, with pure rhymes, now, into the dreamy chant of the gypsy, is the more effective for the colloquial swing, stop, and start of the forester's gruff-voiced diction.

It may be said that Browning has had always in mind imaginary personalities, appearing in various guises and living under manifold circumstances, to guide him in fashioning his style; and seldom is his art not keyed to attune with the theme and motive it interprets. As an artist he disclaimed the nice selection and employment of a style in itself beautiful. As an artist, none the less, he chose to create in every given case a style fitly proportioned to the design, finding in that dramatic relating of the style to the design a more vital beauty.

Browning Study Programmes



POEMS OF ADVENTURE AND HEROISM

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[References are to the *Camberwell Browning*. T. Y. Crowell
& Co., New York and Boston.]

1. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — The Stories of the Poems and how they are Told.

Hints: — 1. "How They Brought the Good News." Tell in a few words the gist of the story. For help in this see *Camberwell Browning*, volume and page cited above.

Note that the story is told by one of the men who took part in the ride. How much do we learn in the first stanza? Simply that the three men galloped out into the midnight with a "good-speed" from the

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watchman who opened the gate, and that the walls echoed his salute. In the second stanza we learn how the three men all kept abreast of each other in the ride ; and, more particularly, what the teller of the story did to make the riding easier for his horse, Roland ; and there is a hint of Roland's superiority indicated when he says that Roland galloped none the less steadily. What additions are made to the picture in the third stanza ? Not only that it had been a dark night, for the moon was setting when they started, but that the men had been galloping all night and that morning is now breaking ; and in the remark with which Joris broke their continued silence, " Yet there is time," we learn that they must reach their journey's end before a certain hour or it will be too late. The fourth and fifth stanzas are devoted to a description of Roland as his master sees him, now the sun is up, through the early morning mist. In the sixth stanza, Dirck's horse gives out ; and in the seventh, we have the picture of Joris and the speaker galloping along in the bright sunlight, and, through Joris again, we learn that their destination is Aix. In the eighth, Joris's roan gives out and Roland alone is left, and for the first time we really know that they have been galloping to Aix to save the city from its fate. In the ninth stanza, we have the last stretch of the gallop, when the rider does everything he can to lighten the weight for Roland and to encourage him, with the result that he reaches Aix before it is too late. In the tenth, the good horse Roland is rewarded by the last measure of wine the burgesses of Aix had, from which we may gather that the town was in a pretty bad way. If it were not for the title of this poem we should be completely in the dark as to the purpose of the three horse-

men until we reach which stanza? And how much does that tell us?

In telling the story does the poet use many words that are hard to understand? What are they, and where do they occur?

Where are the towns which are mentioned in the ride?

(For answers to these questions see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 362.)

Queries for Discussion. — Would the poem be any more interesting if we knew exactly what the news was and what fate it saved Aix from? What do you think makes it so interesting?

Would it have been possible for a horse to gallop as many miles as Browning represents Roland as doing?

Do the little inaccuracies of the poet spoil the effect of the poem?

Hints: — 2. "Through the Metidja." What does this poem describe? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 363.)

Is this ride shared by as many riders as that of the preceding poem? How is its story told? Notice that a series of events do not happen as in the first poem. The story this lonely rider has to make known to us is largely that of the emotions arising within him; but is it only that? From the first stanza we learn that he is trusting to his own heart to guide him somewhere. Swayed by his excited feelings, his scrutiny of some one in whom the tribe he belongs to are confiding is doubly keen, that is, he looks both with the eyes of sense and of insight, "as I were double-eyed." From what is said in the second stanza it comes out that this some one is their chief, who has allied forces under him, and that it is to him

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the rider is speeding. We thus learn sympathetically from the Arab rider himself the information given in the title. His fierce loyalty to his chief appears, also, in this stanza through the defiant pride which makes him ask if witnesses are denied him in the empty desert. This strange question excites not only our curiosity, but our sense of something uncanny. In the third stanza we gather from his mention of an "inner voice," that these witnesses are creatures of his fancy, whom the sliding sands seem to disclose, and then, also, that they are dead men, "homicides," who come boasting to the desert, only to perish there. What do you think is meant by "homicides"? You guess that these are soldiers who come expecting to kill the Arabs, and who are themselves killed. What do you think of the rider's scornful question, "Has he lied?" Does this seem to imply that the chief to whom the rider is so loyal rests under some suspicion with the other Arabs, and that these "homicides" themselves had underestimated his strength and craft as a leader of these desert tribes? Do you think this broken and mysterious way of expressing himself natural and life-like, but a mistake because it leaves the story obscure? Or does it lead us to get at this story better because we have to enter into the feeling of this desperate man to understand it? In the fourth stanza he turns away from his own sensations to describe his horse. What does he say of him? What kind of a foot has a zebra? Is the thigh of an ostrich strong? How does this stanza increase the impression of hot haste and excitement? In the last stanza the sense of adventure and risk, and of the intense tribal feeling of the rider is brought to a climax. How is this done? By his mention of fate, and his

religion, and the blind faith that urges him to this ride, even if it be to death. We seem to learn the story of this ride the best through learning the most of the rider. Since he declares himself ready to die when the Prophet and the Bride stop the blood swelling his veins so fiercely, we learn that his ride is taken in the face of great risks, with almost certain death in the end. Who are the Prophet and the Bride? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 364.)

Queries for Discussion. — Is the ride described in this poem less thrilling than that of the first? Or more so, because you learn from it more of the rider and less of the horse? Is it necessarily true that a more psychological view of an adventure is less interesting than an external view?

Hints: — 3. “Muléykeh.” What in a few words is the story of this poem? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 315.) In the first four stanzas we are introduced to the wonderful mare Muléykeh and her master through the conversation of a stranger to Hóseyn and a friend. Notice the impression a stranger would get of Hóseyn from the poor look of his tent and what the friend would reply to show that he needed neither pity nor scorn. What does he represent Hóseyn as “laughing in his soul,” — that is, as thinking in a laughing mood? What is his friend’s opinion of his attitude? Who does the stranger decide to lavish his pity upon in the fourth stanza, and why? In the fifth stanza the poet takes up the story of Duhl’s attempts to get the coveted prize, Muléykeh. How does Hóseyn treat Duhl’s offer to buy her in the sixth stanza? To Duhl’s second attempt a year later to get Muléykeh by begging her for his son, what is Hóseyn’s answer? When

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after another year Duhl attempts to steal the Pearl, what excuses does he make for his action? To what does Duhl refer in lines 58 and 59? He means to point out that Hóseyn was so generous that he had killed one of his horses to feast a chance-comer and had given his robe to two poor singing girls, and knowing this he had ventured to play upon his generosity when he begged the Pearl from him. In line 65 it appears that he had sent a spy beforehand to find out where the Pearl was kept. What picture does he give us of Hóseyn and his mare as he found them? And of Buhéyseh her sister? Describe the incidents of the theft and the pursuit which followed. Describe the last view we get of Hóseyn.

Queries for Discussion. — If Hóseyn had been represented as resisting the temptation to prove Muléykeh's unrivalled swiftness it would have made the mare the centre of the poem, would it not, instead of her master? Is the poem made the more interesting through Hóseyn's inner struggle being brought out, or less so?

Hints: — 4. "Donald." Give a summary, briefly, of the story. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. XI., p. 324.) Who is the speaker of the first two lines of the poem, and to whom are they addressed, the reader, or "the boys from Oxford"? To whom is this explanation addressed, about the boys, where they were from, and how young they were? The scene of the poem and an account of what "the boys" were talking about is the theme of the following stanzas leading up to the story of Donald. How many of the stanzas are taken up with this preparatory framework for the story, and where does the actual story itself begin? Notice that this preparatory setting of

the story is not merely descriptive, but descriptive in a dramatic way of the scene and the mood and talk both of the boys and the story-teller. How much is made known in this way of the scene inside the bothie? What are the boys doing, and how does their opinion of the value of "Sport" to a man differ from the story-teller's? But does the teller of the story say what he thinks about "Sport"? What is his opinion, do you think, and how do you know? Is Donald's story (lines 61-224) really "just what he told us himself" or the story-teller's version of it? Notice how many stanzas are devoted to putting before the eye the precise scene where Donald's adventure was to take place, before Donald himself is mentioned. This picturesque manner of description belongs to the story throughout; but observe that the interest intensifies at the climax of the meeting with the stag (lines 144-168). Is this due merely to the excitement and suspense at this point, or, also, to the poet's way of telling about it? Notice that the descriptive style changes to direct presentation, first, of Donald's idea of the way out of the situation (lines 144 and 152), expressed dramatically, just as Donald himself thinks it and says it; and second, by the stag's expression, not, of course, in words, but by action, of his understanding of what to do. The story-teller drops the past tense here, and speaks in the present tense, as if the events described were at that moment taking place, reverting to the past tense again with the return to his own feelings about Donald's act (lines 185-189). Show how the description he gives of Donald's crippled state, and how the fellow made his living afterwards is again enlivened by the dramatic style, in *giving the comment of different people on*

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Donald's adventure, including his own. Why does he himself hope he gave twice as much as the rest?

Is the quotation from Homer appropriately put in the mouth of the story-teller? Why? Notice what one of "the boys" says (line 43). What does the story-teller mean, in lines 185-189, by saying he will dare to place himself by God? — that he will venture to judge as God? To whom does he apply the "plain words" he hears? What allusions in the poem reveal the place in Great Britain where the story takes place? What is a "bothie?" Was their fire made of coal or wood? (See line 9.) "The trivet," "Glenlivet." (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 324.) The speaker seems to be satirical about there not having been any boasting; or are five score brace of grouse just enough to fill a game bag? "Ten hours' stalk of the Royal" (line 16). Why would this be an unheard-of feat? What different class of feats has the speaker succeeded in? Explain a "Double-First," line 42. Where is Ross-shire? Some of the characteristics of the country are mentioned in a single line (76). What are these? What other words indicating the country are there in this poem? (See lines 79, 103, 107.) What is the difference between a "red deer" and a "fallow deer?" What is the "pastern" (line 182)? There are two references to books in this poem. Which are they?

Queries for Discussion. — Is this poem a good argument against Sport? Is Donald's act only that of an exceptionally unfeeling and ungenerous sportsman, do you think, or is Walter Scott right in saying what he does about it? (Scott's opinion is given in notes to the poem already cited.)

Hints: — 5. “Tray.” Give a summed-up account. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 306.) As a little introduction to the story of this poem, notice that some one is represented as asking three bards for a tale which will satisfy his thirst of soul. He interrupts the first and the second bard, but decides to hear the third bard’s tale of a beggar child. Notice how this third bard tells the story partly in narrative form and partly in dramatic form. Point out where these changes in the manner of telling occur and notice that the transition from one to the other is made directly without any intermediate “they said” or “he says.” Is there any exception to this? What are the only aspects of the situation that appeal to the bystanders? Do you get the impression that the poet who tells the story is in sympathy with the dog rather than with the bystanders? What is there in the manner of telling the story that gives you this impression?

What unusual words are there in the poem? For “eke” and “habergeon” see Notes, *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 306. Is “helm” an unusual word for helmet? By vivisection is meant the experimenting upon animals while still alive, so that their physical conditions and nervous action may be observed and knowledge gained thereby to be used in the surgical and medical treatment of human beings. This results, of course, in torture to the animal; and Browning was one of those who thought that any gains won by such means cost too much pain to the animal, resulted in a dulling of human kindliness, and, in this case, was grossly stupid because useless. Is any especial hero referred to in *Sir Olaf*? Browning may have had in mind King Olaf II. of Norway, called St. Olaf, who *was very energetic in spreading Christianity throughout*

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his kingdom, and was driven from his throne by Canute in 1030. Or he may simply have used the name to stand as a type of the mediæval Christian Knight of Chivalry.

Is there anything in the poem to indicate where the incident occurred? The only indication is in the word "quay," which points to Paris because there are quays (or *quais*) along the banks of the Seine where little beggar girls might sit. On the other hand, Tray is a good old English name for a dog, used by Shakespeare in "Lear," iii. 6, 65. As the incident really occurred in Paris (see notes before cited) Browning probably thought of the setting as there, while in every other particular he made the poem English.

Query for Discussion. — Is this poem chiefly interesting because of its graphic description of a picturesque event, or because of its pointing a moral against vivisection and against that type of scientist which thinks by external experiment to find out all the secrets of the inner nature?

Hints: — 6. "Hervé Riel." The gist of this story may be given in a few words (see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IX., p. 302), but it is to be noticed that only by giving some idea of how this story is told, can any notion be gained of the risk and excitement attending this adventure of piloting the French ships into the harbor and saving them from the pursuing English fleet. Show how this patriotic adventure is told. In the first stanza, what image gives you a picture of the whole situation? What further knowledge of it do you gain from the second stanza? The desperateness of the situation is shown how, in the third stanza? By direct description? How,

then? How are the council and its decision described in stanza iv., dramatically or narratively? The next stanza introduces the deliverer from a peril not only made known but accepted as hopeless. A gleam of escape dawns with his appearance. How do you get this impression? Nothing definite comes out as to the way of escape, but only that there is one, according to this "simple Breton sailor," until line 60 of stanza vi. Up to that point, however, how does the story get on? The way of escape is only hinted at, but the patriotism and ability and character of the deliverer are made clear, and with the close of the stanza you not only know what the way out is going to be, but you have a glowing sense of the capacity of Hervé to accomplish it. What makes you draw these conclusions as to, first, his character, second, his patriotism, third, his ability? Notice that in stanza vi. Hervé is made to speak for himself directly. Does he boast? Is he right, then, in speaking so confidently of himself and so bitterly of the other pilots? What do you think?

Look up on the map the geographical and local allusions in this poem, and explain their use here. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., Notes, p. 303.) Which is the biggest ship? Notice that this is the flagship of Admiral Damfreville, and is spoken of as having "twelve and eighty guns." Is this an English or a French way of counting? (*Quatre-vingt-douze*.) What does Browning mean by the "rank-on-rank" of "heroes flung pell-mell on the Louvre, face and flank"?

Queries for Discussion. — Does the interest of the poem end with the end of the adventure? Notice that if it did, stanza vii., which describes how the ships

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entered the harbor safely and how Hervé proved his word, would properly end the poem, and all that comes after it would be superfluous. Is it? If you think it is not, say why, and show what interests you in the following stanzas, and how it is all made known. Notice, as a sign that the hero of this adventure is more important than the adventure itself, graphic and exciting as that is, that the title of the poem is "Hervé Riel," and not "How Hervé Riel Steered the Ships into Harbor." Why is that sort of a title the right one for "How they Brought the Good News," while the other suits this?

Hints : — 7. "Echetlos?" (For account of the poem see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., Notes, p. 311.)

This is a very simple and direct narrative. Two stanzas are occupied with a general description of the battle of Marathon. In the third stanza one man is singled out for special description. What point about him is noted first? In the fourth stanza a description of this man's appearance is given. How is he then described as helping the Greeks. What became of him when the battle was over and what did the Oracle say about it? The final stanza gives a reflection made by the poet, himself, upon the last words of the Oracle, l. 27, — "The great deed ne'er grows small," namely, that the great name too often does, as illustrated in the case of what distinguished Athenians?

Are any unusual words used in this poem? A "share," l. 12, is the broad blade of the plough that cuts the ground. "Tunnies," l. 13, are fish belonging to the mackerel family, but somewhat different in form and much larger than the ordinary mackerel.

Those found in the Mediterranean sometimes weigh 1,000 pounds. "Phalanx," l. 16: In early Greek times a body of soldiers formed in a square, in close rank and file with their shields joined and their pikes crossing each other. (For an account of Greek Oracles, line 25, see Smith's "History of Greece.")

Queries for Discussion. — Is the attitude of a genuine hero rightly to make light of honor due him as the doer of a great deed? And is it necessarily a mistake, as this poem suggests, for the public to honor the doer of a deed, instead of the deed itself? Why? Is it right for a country to show its gratitude substantially to its heroes; but wrong for the heroes to accept too much? Or what is the right principle to follow, and what are the limitations that ought to govern a state's expression of honor to its heroes?

Hints: — 8. "Incident of the French Camp." Does Browning himself tell this story, or does he assume that a Frenchman tells it? How do you know? What picture do you get of Napoleon in the first stanza? What sense is there in giving his thoughts in the second stanza? Have they anything to do with the incident? What is the incident? Notice how it is told — a rider gallops up, alights, tells news which it takes the greatest nerve for him to stand up long enough to give. How is this made known to you? When he has delivered his message what effect does it have upon the Emperor which reveals the connection between his thoughts and such an incident? The last stanza adds to the effect of the story by showing that not even to the Emperor are his plans so important as to make him ignore this young soldier's sacrifice of his life for them.

Queries for Discussion. — In what does the climax

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of effect in this poem consist? In its portrayal of love of country, the glory of France, the character of Napoleon, or the devotion of the youth?

*Hints:—*9. "Pheidippides." Give first a sketch of the story. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., Notes, page 301.)

Do you get any idea from the first stanza as to the scene of the poem or who is speaking? All that is evident is that some one is paying reverence to his country and his gods, and especially to Pan, as a savior and patron. In the eighth line it appears that this person is addressing the Archons of Athens, standing alive before them, and in the eleventh we learn, by his repeating the order he had received from the Archons, who he was, and what he was ordered to do. From the way in which he describes his run to Athens, his breaking in upon the Spartans, and his feelings at the actions of the Spartans, should you say that this professional runner had the soul of a patriot? Observe (line 41) how he describes himself as saved from mouldering to ash only by the word "Athens" in Sparta's reply. What further effect does Sparta's perfidy have upon him? He even accuses the gods of his land of bad faith. To what will he give his allegiance in preference to them? Is his meeting with Pan the chief event of the poem? How does he say the god looked and spoke, and what does Pan give him as a pledge that he will help Athens? What further qualities of his character come out when Miltiades questions him as to the reward he is to receive himself? First his modesty in not relating what Pan had said of himself, and then his singleness of purpose in being satisfied with a reward that simply promised him release from the runner's toil. Observe

the picture he draws of what he means to do after the Persians have been conquered. What actually happened to him after the battle of Marathon, showing that Pan had in mind a different sort of release from his toil from that Pheidippides had imagined?

Give an account of the Greek gods and goddesses mentioned in the poem. (See notes before cited. For further information, see Gayley's "Mythology in English Literature" or Smith's "Dictionary of Classical Mythology.") Which was the special tutelary deity of Athens? Give an account of the customs and superstitions mentioned.

Queries for Discussion.—If you had no other means of judging than this poem supplies, what should you say, from the character of Pheidippides, were the main characteristics of a patriot? Does it detract from the loyalty of Pheidippides at all that he does not take it in that the meed of his services will be death? What is the inner appropriateness to the theme of Pan, the rude earth-god being the best friend of Athens? Does it mean that to the crude primal instinct of attachment to the earth where one was born Athens owes her salvation? Is patriotism, because it is an elementary sentiment, likely to wane with the progress of civilization? Or is it capable of development, and how, do you think, ought it to be developed?—So that a Sparta may be concerned in the welfare of an Athens?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—Why, and How the Deed Was Done.

Hints:—If you look through these poems you may see that in all of them, except "Donald," some risky act is undertaken that contributes to the general good.

The sportsman in "Donald" is seized with a sudden

desire to wreak his pleasure on the stag, at an opportune moment, and no other considerations have any force beside that merely selfish instinct. A critical instant comes and a risk to run presents itself to the mind of Donald as to all the other actors in these poems, but Donald alone runs the risk and does his deed without some kindly or social impulse in view.

In "Muléykeh" Hóseyn is seized, at the opportune chance when his mare is within his reach, with the disinterested impulse, arising from his love and pride in her, which makes him act directly against his more selfish caution as her owner. But in this poem, as in "Donald," the story told is of an exciting event with an element of chance in it.

It may be said that these are poems of adventure therefore ; but are they poems of equal heroism ? And if one has more of the heroic in it than the other, which do you think it is, and how does it come out ? In drawing your conclusions compare with the other poems and ask how it is with these, also.

Because all are stories of exciting events with an element of chance, and lead to a risk willingly undertaken for the sake of some end the actors think good for others, are they, therefore, all equally heroic ? Notice the way the deeds were done and what they were done for in each case.

In "How They Brought the Good News," and "Through the Metidja," the object held in view by the riders is left a little vague. Still it is evident that the ride has, in both cases, a patriotic motive ; but is the peril equal ? What risk does the Arab rider run ? And ask, in comparison with his, what the risk is for Dirck and Joris and Roland's rider ; and who the real hero is who pays the price for the race to bring good

news to Aix. In each of the three horse-poems the horses share differently in the result; show how. In how many of these poems are human beings alone concerned in the deed done, and in which is the human interest the least important?

In "Hervé Riel," why the deed was done is as definite as the how. In "Echetlos" the why is implied. In the "Incident of a French Camp," is the way in which the young hero bears himself more important to the reader than what he does? Is it the glory of France or devotion to his chief which inspires him?

Compare the different heroes in the different poems: (1) as to whether they risk life or not, (2) whether the ends they seek are equally valuable, (3) whether they look for reward or not. Do you admire Hervé Riel more as Browning represents him, asking but for one day's leave, than as history records him, asking for a lifelong furlough? (See Vol. IX., Notes, p. 302.)

In thinking over the situations presented in the remaining poems ask yourself in which the kindly motive — the desire to meet a personal risk for a social good is the most mixed with the necessity to do harm to some in order to do good to others?

In "Hervé Riel," for example, the salvation of the French fleet is an annoyance and chagrin to the English, and in "Pheidippides" and "Echetlos" the heroism that helps the Athenians spites the Spartans and scatters the Persians, while the service done the Emperor and the glory won for France in planting the French colors in Ratisbon, however glorious and good from the French point of view, is disastrously meant for the German people. But in "Hervé Riel" is the benevolence accomplished for the French fraught

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with as much malevolence to the English as the heroism of the French youth in the "Incident of the French Camp" is to the German city? It might be said, from an unpartisan point of view, that an act of heroism in war is sometimes nobler, because more justifiable, under some circumstances than others.

Are all these poems written from a partisan point of view? — that is, is the way of looking at the deed Athenian in "Pheidippides" and French in the French poems, or are there any indications that the deed itself is more enthusiastically dwelt upon in "Hervé Riel," and the characters of the Youth and the Emperor, rather more than the deed alone, in the "Incident of the French Camp?"

Queries for Discussion. — Does the blind unconsciousness of their deeds on the part of Roland and Tray make them less or more heroic in your opinion than Hervé, Pheidippides, the French boy, or the Greek peasant? Are such acts finer in proportion to the unconsciousness of risk, or to the regardlessness of risk? Is the human being capable, therefore, of greater possibilities of heroism and cowardice because he is aware of the peril and understands better what end he seeks to accomplish?

Is the service done by a Hervé Riel in rescuing his country's navy from destruction more exalting because it is a deed that saves life than that of the French youth who helps his emperor in aggressive action against life? Should you say that an act of heroism appealing to the universal heart was necessarily more impressive than one making a partisan appeal or not?

In estimating the value of heroism in thrilling the spirit, is why the deed is done more important than how it is done? In the poet's art of telling a story

effectively, it might depend more on the way of telling it, and on whether the poet meant to lay his emphasis on the character of the actors, or on the quality of their heroism.

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — The Historical Background.

Hints : — In considering what historical background these poems have, the stories they tell or the imagination or skill of the poet in telling them may be put aside, and the elements of actual life-experience out of which the poems were made remain to be kept in view. It may then be seen that these foundation-elements of life-experience are of several kinds. There may be some historical event or occurrences belonging to the social life of man out of which the poem arose ; or there may be some other poem or story or tradition on which this one is founded, in which case, social life or the general human experience is still the source of the poem, but pushed a step farther back ; or, there may be, at the root of it, some experience of life belonging to a single person. The first is what is commonly understood to be the historical source ; the second, the literary ; the third is ordinarily spoken of as biographical. But all are alike traceable to that prior experience of life which may be called, broadly speaking, the historical background. Bearing this in mind, we may find some interesting differences in the kind of historical background these poems have. Asking now, for example, what foundation in history there was for "How they brought the Good News," we find, first, that Browning denied any exact basis for the particular occurrence told (see what he says in notes to the poem in the *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 362), and yet that the story is connected not merely

with two real cities but with a very interesting chapter in the history of modern Europe ; and that this incident, which Browning imagined, is a probable one which might easily have been a real one, arising out of the siege of Aix and the union of Ghent with Aix to resist the despotic control of Spain ; and that all this, although it does not enter directly into the story of the poem, makes a sort of framework for it. If you like to know what the alliance of Holland and the other States of the Netherlands against Philip II. meant in modern history, and what it accomplished, turn to Motley's " Rise of the Dutch Republic," chapter viii. To the historic framework surrounding this little poem we owe thus a picturesque side-light. But you will see that the poem does not celebrate this historical line of events. It is the carrying of the good news, and not the news itself or its effects, which is the main thing here. What Browning says about the origin of this poem, too (see notes cited), assures us that he has made more use of life in the shape of his own personal experience in riding " York," than he has of life in the shape of historical or social experience. Still, this personal experience could scarcely be called autobiographical as it stands in the poem, here. It is to be noticed that although he has made more use of one than the other, he has made use both of personal and historical life in the same way, — that is, indirectly.

In " Through the Metidja " there is scarcely even an indirect use of personal experience ; but this poem more distinctly, but still indirectly, makes use of social experience. It involves another interesting bit of historical life, still more modern, belonging to the present century and connected with a class of events still taking place, the subjugation, by the

stronger and more civilized nations, of the weaker and less developed races. In this case it is the colonization of Algeria by France which led to the repeated uprisings of the wild Arab tribes of this part of North Africa, led by their able and noble chieftain Abd-el-Kadr, against the French invaders of their country. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. IV., p. 363, for the dates and the main events in Abd-el-Kadr's career.) Notice how indefinitely, and yet picturesquely Browning has used this historical background, what allusions to the events of the Algerian revolt, to the Arab character, customs, and religion he has woven into the poem, and the atmosphere of sympathy with which he has surrounded this desperately loyal subject of the Arab chief.

In comparison with these two poems what sort of historical background may the other horse-poem, "Muléykeh," the two other animal-poems, "Donald," and "Tray" and the four remaining war-incident poems be said to have? Should you say that the sort of historical element underlying the first two poems was of that sub-class of literary source which rests on a folk-story or some such traditional tale? Can you judge what sort of literary source a story has, even if you do not know just what the original of that particular story was? How does the incident from which "Tray" arose (see notes to that poem, *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 306), differ from the older traditional tale of "Donald" and the still older one of "Muléykeh," or the ancient classic stories of "Echelos" and "Pheidippides?" (See notes, *Camberwell Browning*, for information as to these.) Show in each case what use the poet has made of the historical element; how he has enlivened and enriched it, and made

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it savor of its original country and nationality ; and to what end he has adapted it. Are the later poems of this series more complex in their historical, racial, or moral interest, than the earlier ones ? Bring this out more fully.

Queries for Discussion. — Does the actual occurrence of any incident told of in a poem make it more vivid and interesting or not ? Give the reasons in favor of historical accuracy on the one side, and the superiority of fact over fancy ; and then, on the other side, bring out all that may be said in favor of the literary use of history, and the truth to life that may be attained by an artistic use of the imagination : and then ask which gives you the truer view of life, history or literature ?

Is the direct way of relating historical or personal events any more effective or lifelike than the indirect ? Or does that question also depend upon the manipulation and the point of view ? Give examples of the direct and indirect. Are any of this series of poems directly told ? Is "Donald" an example of direct relation, or does it only assume to be an experience of the poet's own in story-telling in a Highland bothie ?

IV. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
— The Artistry of the Poems.

[We use this word, "artistry," because it is used by Browning in "The Ring and the Book" to denote the fashioning of the poem out of the raw material of fact or thought and is more appropriate because more special than the word "art."]

Hints : — Concerning the rhythm of "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," Joaquin Miller tells this interesting little anecdote. He had been invited by the Archbishop of Dublin to meet Browning, Dean Stanley, Houghton, and others.

“Two of the archbishop’s beautiful daughters had been riding in the park with the Earl of Aberdeen. ‘And did you gallop?’ asked Browning of the younger beauty. ‘I galloped, Joyce [Dirck] galloped, we galloped all three.’ Then we all laughed at the happy and hearty retort, and Browning, beating the time and clang of galloping horses’ feet on the table with his fingers, repeated the exact measure in Latin from Virgil; and the archbishop laughingly took it up, in Latin, where he left off. I then told Browning I had an order — it was my first — for a poem, from the *Oxford Magazine*, and would like to borrow the measure and spirit of his ‘Good News’ for a prairie fire on the plains, driving buffalo and all other life before it into the river. ‘Why not borrow from Virgil as I did? He is as rich as one of your gold mines, while I am but a poor scribe.’” The line Browning quoted from Virgil was probably the celebrated one descriptive of galloping horses: “*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*” Notice, however, that Browning has adapted this metre to suit himself. Instead of making Virgil’s line of dactylic feet (one accented and two unaccented syllables) ending with a spondee, he begins his lines always with one or two extra unaccented syllables, and always ends the line with an extra accented syllable. By some, this poem is scanned as anapaestic (two syllables unaccented and one accented) ending with an iamb and sometimes beginning with an iamb (an unaccented and an accented syllable.) But we think it will be found that a delicate perception of sound will dictate the scanning of the poem as dactylic, even if we had not Browning’s word for it that he borrowed the rhythm of it from Virgil. In reading the poem one feels that to a certain extent it

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imitates the gallop of horses. Is this entirely due to the dactylic measure? If this were so, then dactyls would always suggest galloping horses. (Compare the metre of Longfellow's "Evangeline.") The suggestion is probably gained more definitely through the regular recurrence of the final accented syllable to every line by means of which the sharp and regular rhythm of a gallop is conveyed. The rhyming couplets also add to the rhythmic regularity: Is an atmosphere of haste given to the poem by the direct way in which the story is told?

Where are there any examples of poetic ornament, and what are they? (See lines 4, 5, 15, 19, 24, 39, 40, 41, 47.) Are there any allusions in the poem which do not naturally grow out of the subject, like the references to the places they passed on their ride?

"Through the Metidja" also suggests the swift pace of a horse, but the effect is gained in a very different way. The first thing you will notice about this poem is that it has but one rhyme sound all through, and that only one word, "ride," is repeated; further, beside the end rhymes, there are a number of internal rhymes. Contrast the rhythm of this poem with that of the preceding poem and notice that it is anapaestic with two feet in each line for the greater part of the poem, but that some of the lines are longer, having three feet, one anapaestic, and two iambic. Point out these longer lines. Miss Ethel Davis, writing in *Poet-lore* (August-September, 1893, Vol. V, p. 436), says of this poem: "On the first reading of 'Through the Metidja,' the twinship of form and matter is perhaps the most strongly marked. One hears in the opening verse no word to picture the horse that car-

ries the speaker, but at once he becomes the central figure of the poem. His beating hoofs exhilarate, and the fresh, clear air animates, in spite of lines which in themselves would surround the rider with dust and heat. The man himself would be forgotten but for the added length of the sixth line. In that the motion of the steed is gone, and one is brought back to the fact that the thought dominates the gallop."

Is the undoubted prominence of the horse in this poem due to the constant recurrence in the rhymes of the "i" sound, reminding one of the fact of the riding, as well as to the constant refrain "as I ride?" Should you say that the rhythm suggested galloping, or a more steady swing? Upon this Mr. Bulkeley says (London Browning Society Papers): "What a journey the Arab gets through with in the course of the day with his long easy strides!" As well as the stress on the accented syllables of the verse, they also have quantity, the "i" sound being a very long sound. Compare this with the preceding poem as to poetical ornaments.

"Muléykeh." The line in this poem has six accents, the majority of the feet being iambic, but there is a good deal of irregularity. For example, in the very first line there are two anapaestic feet:

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
If a stranger passed the tent of Hóseyn, he cried "A churl's."

Again, line 3 begins with a trochaic foot and the last foot is anapaestic:

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
"Nay would a friend exclaim, he needs nor pity nor scorn."

Point out all such irregularities. Are there any perfectly regular lines? The variety given to the stanza by the irregularities is added to by the

rhyme scheme which does not obtrude itself as in the previous poems. Notice that the first and fourth, second and third, third and sixth lines rhyme. Is there much ornamentation of the verse in this poem? Is there any other line or phrase in the poem as beautiful as line 72? Of this line Mr. Bulkeley writes "How admirably not only the swiftness of *Muléké* as she dashes past us to the goal, but, what we chiefly see, the hairy amplitude of the long tail and the rush of the hoofs, are brought before us."

"Donald" presents still another variety of rhythm and rhyming. In the first stanza, each line has three accents, and anapaestic and iambic feet mixed. Notice also that every line ends with an extra short syllable (called a weak or feminine ending), and that the rhymes are in the second and fourth lines. Compare the remaining stanzas with this first one, and notice all the variations from it that may occur. When the story reaches its climax notice that the speaker uses the present tense instead of the past, which he has been using, and that Donald's own words are given directly. There is also considerable variation of the rhythm. See, for examples, lines 189 to 196.

Is poetic imagery any more characteristic of this poem than of the preceding?

"Tray." The principal irregularities of rhythm in this poem are in the first stanza where the fifth line is broken off after three feet so that it does not rhyme with the first and second lines as in all the other stanzas, and the double rhymes ending in weak syllables, in lines 6, 9, 10, 28, and 29. Point out what the normal form of the verse is and any other variations you may discover in it.

"Hervé Riel." This poem is very fine as to rhythm,

rhyme, and stanza-form. The majority of the lines have four stresses, but a good many have only two, and several have three. The feet vary from one to three unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable. In line 75 there is even a foot with five unaccented syllables, thus :

“ Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide seas profound.”

Many of the short lines might be scanned as if they had three feet, thus :

“ Then was called a council straight.”

but the ear tells one that such a line is more in harmony with the rest of the verse if scanned —

“ Then was called a council straight.”

The effect of all these short syllables is to reflect the excitement of the situation and the necessity for quick and decisive action.

Notice that the stanzas vary in length just as paragraphs in prose might, each stanza taking up a fresh phase of the story. Compare the rhyming of the different stanzas with each other and notice also the examples of alliteration. Compare with the other poems in this respect.

“Echetlos” is comparatively simple in its form, stanzas of three lines, all of which rhyme with each other. The lines have six feet, mostly iambic, but notice the variations.

“Incident of the French Camp.” Notice how simple the rhyme and rhythm is in this, compared with “Hervé Riel,” for example. The lines regularly alternate between four accents and three accents, and the rhymes also alternate.

“Pheidippides.” The peculiarity of this poem is that, although the rhythm is iambic, most of the lines begin with an accented syllable, sometimes followed by two unaccented, sometimes by one unaccented syllable.

The rhymes are also distributed in a very curious way. The first line rhymes with the seventh, the second with the eighth, the third with the sixth and the fourth with the fifth. Writing on “Browning’s Poetic Form” in *Poet-lore* (Vol. II., p. 234, June, 1890), Dr. D. G. Brinton says: “Not unfrequently, Browning employs rhyme in such a manner that one must regard it merely as a means of heightening his secondary rhythm. The rhyming words are so far apart that we are aware only of a faint but melodious echo. The always artificial and somewhat mechanical effect of rhyme is thus avoided, while its rhythmic essence is retained. I illustrate this by a verse from ‘Pheidippides;’ a masterpiece of artistic skill.”

Does the language in this poem appear to you to be richer and fuller than in any of the preceding poems? Is this due to the nature and setting of the subject, or to the use of poetical imagery?

Query for Discussion. — From the study of these poems, should you think Browning was lacking in poetic form, as some people have said, or should you think rather that he showed consummate skill in adapting his form to the needs of his thought?

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I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*

— Sketch of the Subject-matter of the Poems. For help in this see notes to *Camberwell Browning* as referred to above.

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*

— How the Story is Told.

Hints : — With the exception of "Ponte dell' Angelo" and "The Pope and the Net," these poems are all told in the simplest narrative style, and these two are merely given a semblance of the dramatic monologue form, the former by the fact that the story is put into the mouth of the person who is rowing the boat, evidently the poet, and the latter, by its being put into the mouth of a visitor to the Pope in question. In either of these cases does the character of the speaker affect the point of the poem in any way? When a poem is told as a simple story, it gives the narrator an opportunity to intersperse comments of his own about the story. Are there any

such comments in "The Boy and the Angel?" In "The Twins," before the poet begins the little story, he expresses an opinion of Martin Luther and the sort of fables he used to write — so pointed in their moral that they stuck like burs. In the "Pied Piper," the only comment made by the poet is at the end where he addresses his little friend Willie Macready in regard to the moral to be drawn from the story. In the three last stanzas of "Gold Hair" the poet also draws a moral. Does he intrude any remarks of his own throughout the rest of the poem? In "The Cardinal and the Dog" how much does the poet himself appear? In "The Bean Feast" he expresses an opinion as to the story he is going to tell; what is it? And in "Muckle-Mouth Meg" the poet is not obtruded at all. Although the poems are all in simple narrative style, most of them are enlivened by quotations which give them a dramatic effect. In which of these poems under consideration is this dramatic effect most marked?

Query for Discussion. — Since a dramatic effect is gained both in the narrative poems and those in monologue form, what is the real difference between them?

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — The Folk-lore of these Poems.

Of all these poems the only one that is purely imaginary is "The Boy and the Angel." For suggestions as to the sources of the others, see notes to *Camberwell Browning* as given above. Observe the differences in the nature of the stories. Some tell only of possible events, others have imaginative elements in them.

Of the imaginative stories is there any more probable than another? What are the imaginative elements in each of the stories and what is their source?

In "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" the imaginative element is, of course, the effect of the piper's music on the rats and then upon the children. What stories in mythology does this remind you of, and what is the explanation of such stories? See "Hymn to Hermes," translated by Shelley, also Mercury, Arion, Orpheus, in Gayley's "Classic Myths in English Literature." These are myths of the wind as a musician; Hermes, or the wind, is also the leader of souls to Hades after death. There are also many traces in folk-stories of a belief in the idea that the soul escaped from the body in the form of some little animal, a mouse or a bird. The story of the "Pied Piper" combines all these mythical elements in a setting of reality. In the story of "Gold Hair," it seems so improbable that the girl should be able to hide the gold coins in her hair that this story may be said to have an imaginative element in it, also. In "The Cardinal and the Dog" the big black dog might be explained as a subjective hallucination due to a diseased state of the mind, but in a superstitious age such appearances of a disordered brain were considered veritable visions from the other world. In this case the dog was an emissary of the Devil come to claim his own, as mentioned in the notes in the *Camberwell Browning*. (See Fiske, "Myths and Myth-makers" and Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," for further information upon these mythical dogs.)

Or it might be explained simply as a story invented by the Protestants, through their superstitious horror over his illness and death, to cast discredit upon this Cardinal, who was especially their enemy. Which do you think the most likely?

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In "Ponte dell' Angelo" the imaginative element is prominent and evidently belongs to the order of legend called explanatory, that is, it was probably invented to account for the figure of the guardian angel.

The poet has not worked up the subject matter in any of these poems, but has simply put into verse the stories as he found them.

Queries for Discussion.—Which do you find the most entertaining of these stories, — those with or those without imaginative elements? Are there qualities in "The Boy and the Angel," Browning's own invention, that place it above all the other poems? What should you say they were?

IV. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—The Inner Meaning of the Poems.

Hints: — The simplicity belonging to the story and way of telling it in this series of poetic tales belongs also to the meaning. "Muckle-Mouth Meg" cannot be said to have any deeper design than to be lively and amusing. The moral lesson brought out in the last stanza of "The Pied Piper" is so hackneyed a maxim that it is put jokingly, the forced rhyme assisting, to let the reader see that the poet is laughingly in earnest while he points the moral and holds up a warning finger over the mischief befalling the man who refuses to pay the piper.

Which of the other poems are entirely humorous in their aim and implications? What should you say was the moral of "The Pope and the Net?" That humility was a useless virtue except for the lower clergy? Or is the poem susceptible of a less jocular moral turn? The virtues of another sort of a prelate are illustrated in "The Bean Feast." This Pope professed humility even after he became Pope, and

when it was not only of no advantage to himself but was of advantage to others. Yet, although the popular story of this good Pope is told in a more earnest way, so that the lovable and benevolent qualities of the kindly man arouse a glow of genuine esteem for him which is, in itself, essentially moral, it may be noticed that the canny Pope who made humility useful to himself instead of to others, is written about in a similar broad and tolerant vein, as if the human characteristics of each Pope, despite the fact that one was morally superior to the other, were almost equally enjoyable to the poet, and made so, also, by his treatment of the two stories, to the reader. Do the two stories enhance each other, when their inner bearing with respect to these two contrasting characters is brought out? It is not unusual for Browning to hang his portraits in this way, putting two different types side by side, as companion pieces.

Why is the "Ponte dell' Angelo" story the most naive of all these folk-stories in its moral implication? Notice that the unethical conduct of the lawyer in fleecing all his clients is counterbalanced by his prayers to the Madonna, so that the story leaves it to be supposed that God's fit punishment may be delayed repeatedly and finally remitted altogether through due observance of church ceremonies. What do you think about the morality of this?

"Gold Hair" has perhaps a quizzical quality. It is ironical, half in earnest, but meaning something a little different from what is expressly said. It is written with a kind of teasing enjoyment, on the poet's part, of a pious anecdote of a simple-minded Catholic family. So perhaps is "The Cardinal and the Dog," written with a similar relish for Protestant

simple-mindedness in the credulity over the apparition sent to scourge the enormous wickedness of the Cardinal, whose crime it was to be on the other side in the great church controversy and its most staunch and able friend. But how do you guess this? The poem is written entirely from the credulous standpoint, and the last line is in accord with this too, and yet it suggests that the story is a partisan one. In the case of "Gold Hair" a more skeptical point of view is insinuated — the point of view of the hearers of the legend in an "after-time" (see lines 56-60), when the "mouth might twitch with a dubious smile." This quizzical quality underlying the narration of the story is not without a sober twist at the end (lines 136-150), which leaves one in doubt again whether or not a more serious moral is intended? What are you inclined to think about this? Is the poet really of the opinion that the heart is desperately wicked, or is he even here only pretending to be serious? If so, what is his meaning here? Is he really more amused than shocked over the miserliness of the girl, and disposed to sympathize with her attachment to the things of earth? And what does his professed edification amount to then? Does he assent to the doctrine of original sin, while meaning something a little different — that the human heart is necessarily human, and full of earthly longings and is likely to be unnatural or perhaps hypocritical if it assumes to care only for heaven?

Which of the remaining poems of this series are perfectly serious in their moral implication? Is the sportiveness which has been noticed due in all cases to the introduction somewhere in the poem of the poet's or some other point of view than that of the original story-teller? Which stories are told the most simply and directly?

"The Boy and the Angel," which is evidently deeper and richer in its inner meaning than any of the other poems, is told with absolute simplicity and without any of the doubleness belonging to most of the others; yet it is to be noticed that the most pointed of its couplets is given, in parenthesis, as a comment of the narrator's; and it happens that this was a later addition to the poem, first appearing in 1863. It is interesting, too, to learn that various other little touches that have deepened its significance were added, after its first appearance in *Hood's Magazine* in 1845, upon its inclusion, later in the same year, in the Bells and Pomegranates Series, with other poems which we know were revised and sometimes changed in accordance with the criticism of Elizabeth Barrett, who read the proofs. There is a passing mention in a letter of hers to Browning (August 30, 1845, see "Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett," vol. i. p. 180), which leads to the inference that she thought the inner meaning of this poem was open to objection on the score of its portrayal of the angel Gabriel. Later (p. 261), she says, "'Theocrite' overtakes that wish of mine which ran on so fast." The main alterations made in the second version were: the addition of lines 55-58, 63 and 64, 67 and 68, 71 and 72, and the final couplet, and the omission after line 74 of the following couplet:

"Be again the boy all curled;
I will finish with the world."

There were a few other slighter alterations which served to make the verse more regular without affecting the inner significance of the poem, but these cited seem *designed* either to make the story clearer, by

detailing how the change was brought about, as in lines 55 to 58, 63 and 64, or to render it more unmistakable that the moral lesson implied is not the hopeless superiority of the angelic over the human but rather the inimitable excellence of the human which uplifts it and sets it side by side with the angelic. Theocrite's "little human praise" had a quality so distinctly its own that Gabriel's best efforts to rival it were ineffectual. It was then in reality not at all inferior or to be disdained; and the emphasis is laid not on the point that it was useless or presumptuous for Theocrite to wish to praise God the "Great-way" as Pope, but rather on the point that not even angelic power can displace the human. The omission of the couplet quoted tends to redeem the archangel from any assumption of superiority or charge of officiousness, and the couplet finally added puts boy and angel on the same level as twin spirits in God's praise, the human and the angelic not seeking to outrival but to supplement one another, — "They sought God, side by side."

Queries for Discussion. — Do you think these alterations are improvements? Do they justify themselves by preventing the poem from being mistaken as leading merely to the hackneyed moral that every one must stay in the place to which he was born? Is the spirit of the poem aristocratic in the sense that it shows that all cannot be equal, or is it democratic, in the sense that it shows that place or rank is unimportant and that different personalities, because each is of unique value, are equal and never to be superseded by any other? Mr. George Willis Cooke says of this poem: "The lesson is the same as that of 'Pippa Passes,' 'All service ranks the same with God,' and therefore we are not to seek to escape from the tasks assigned

to us." Do you agree with this? But does not the poem intimate, on the contrary, that in this case, at any rate, all service did not rank the same with God, since he missed in Gabriel's praise a quality that only Theocrite's had? and does it follow, if it be accepted that the moral is essentially the same, that therefore "we are not to seek to escape from the tasks assigned us"? Or do you think that Elizabeth Barrett's quarrel with the original version of the poem may really have been that its inner significance might be misinterpreted in this way? Do the alterations tend to make clear what the poet's design really amounts to? And do you think that this design is to illustrate the value and significance to God of each and every human individuality? But, in that case, why was not Theocrite's praise of God when he was Pope as grateful as when he was a boy at his work-bench? Or is this merely because his office as Pope was not his own, but thrust on him by the angel, so that the drift of the poem remains the same, without emphasis upon the question of rank, but only upon the question of individual worth?

The interpretation of "Gold Hair" suggested in the "Hints" on that poem is that the naïveté of the guide-book story amused the poet, while he detected in it, despite its simplicity, a wise kernel of perpetual truth, the truth belonging to a keen observation of human foibles. So, in re-telling the legend he gives it a whimsical cast, but half accepts its old-time pious reflection upon the weaknesses of mortality, yet not without managing to convey another more modern and more tolerant way of regarding such weaknesses, as frailties so natural to the flesh that sin and blame scarcely belong to them, so much as suspicion does to all the pretences of

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humanity to be saintly. Are you inclined to think this the right interpretation or not? Will any other interpretation account as well for the humor of the poem? Why not? Does it agree, in a way characteristic of Browning, with the view of the human presented in "The Boy and the Angel," as having a distinct quality of its own through differing from the heavenly which it must in vain strive to rival? But do you think it morally good for man that he should accept such a view of human nature? Would it be better for him to take the old pious view and be deceived, if it be deception, and to think that he may become perfect, for fear lest he cease to attempt to improve? Or, do you think it best for a human being to be clear-sighted enough to recognize his merely human limitations and yet to struggle to attain the utmost possible degree of development?

V. *Topic for Paper, Private Study, or Classwork.*
—The Art of the Poems.

Hints: — The art-form in "The Boy and the Angel" is very simple. The lines have four stresses, and each stanza has two lines rhymed. There is some variation in the distribution of the stresses. Sometimes the first syllable in the line is accented, when the line is seven syllables in length, and sometimes the second syllable is accented. There are a few places where each syllable is accented without any unaccented syllable between, for example in line 2, where "Praise" and "God" both have an accent, and in line 19, where every syllable is accented. Is there any other line in the poem where "Praise God" is differently accented? The language all through this poem is exceedingly simple. The comparison in line 25, "Like a rainbow's birth" is the

only one in the poem, is it not? Is there not a certain charm in this very simple language exactly suited to the subject?

In "The Twins" the rhyme and rhythm scheme is also very simple, the lines having three stresses and the first and third, second and fourth lines rhyming. Notice if there are any variations in the distribution of the short lines.

In the "Pied Piper" the lines usually have four stresses, but the unaccented syllables are distributed very irregularly. Point out all the lines you find with a different number of accents. Point out the two-syllabled rhymes ending in short syllables, weak endings as they are called. Is there any regularity about the distribution of the rhymes? About the length of the stanzas? Are the shorter lines introduced at stated places. The effect of all this variation of form is to make the poem bright and rapid in movement.

"Gold Hair" has lines with four stresses sometimes preceded by one, sometimes by two unaccented syllables. The very first stanza, however, begins with an accented syllable followed by a pause. Are there any other examples of this in the poem? There are also some lines beginning with an accented syllable and followed by a short syllable. The last line in each stanza, however, the fifth, has only three stresses.

Is the fifth stanza of this poem the most poetical on account of its comparison between the sunset sky and the death of Gold-Hair? Are there any other examples of poetical figures in the poem?

In "The Cardinal and the Dog" the lines have seven stresses, the accented syllable being preceded by an unaccented one. In some cases the accent falls on syllables that *seem* short, while a syllable that *seems*

long is unaccented; for example in the first line "the" is accented, and the word next to it, "high," is unaccented. Do you find any other examples of this? Do you object to the roughness of this sort of accenting, or does it remind you of the early English ballad form, and so give a quaintness to the poem in keeping with the subject. Point out those lines which end with a short unaccented syllable. Notice that the stanzas are of different lengths. Also that the rhyme scheme is different for each stanza.

In "Ponte dell' Angelo" all the lines except the last have four stresses and that has three. Point out all the variations you observe in the distribution of the short syllables. What is the rhyme scheme? Are there any poetical figures in the poem?

In "The Bean Feast" the lines have six stresses with a short syllable preceding the accented syllable, with some variations. For example, line 1 begins with an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one. Almost every line has also an extra short syllable after the accented syllable in the middle of the line, and sometimes two extra short syllables. Point out all such places and notice how the regularity of this irregularity adds to the rhythmical effect of the poem. The rhyme scheme is simple. Are there any bad rhymes in the poem? Is the rhythm of the "Pope and the Net" similar to that of "The Bean Feast." Point out any differences you may observe, also the difference in the length of the stanza and the rhymes. In "Muckle-Mouth Meg" the lines alternate between three and four stresses, preceded sometimes by two and sometimes by one unaccented syllable. There are two rhymes to each stanza, alternating lines rhyming together. Sometimes the

rhymes are double, in which case the line ends with an extra short syllable. Is there any regularity in the distribution of the double and single rhymes? From the study of the distribution of stresses and unaccented syllables in these poems in how many different kinds of metre are they? Does the poet use alliteration much in any of them? What allusions are there (see Notes, *Camberwell Browning*), and what sort of relation do they bear to the subject matter?

Queries for Discussion. — Upon what do these poems depend chiefly for their poetical effect, rhythm and rhyme, poetic ornamentation, the imaginative quality of the subject-matter, their humor or the terse dramatic way in which they are told?

Is there any one of the group that you like better than all the rest, if so why? Or do you like each one for its own special qualities?

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I. *Topic for Paper, Private Study, or Classwork.*
 — The Life of Love Illustrated in Browning's Shorter Poems.

Hints : — Characterize the various phases of love brought into light, grouping together those which have some mood or trait in common. The slighter and more evanescent moods of "Inapprehensiveness," and the sonnet, "Eyes, calm beside thee" may be said to belong to latent love. Not the passion itself but the suppression of the passion felt to be ready to spring into life is what is expressed in both of these poems. Notice also whether the expression is direct, whether it is the possible lover who speaks and tells the story of his own mood, and whether in both cases the mood is betrayed in a purely lyrical form, or how? What other poems of this series may be classed with these on the score that they reveal a nascent or possible but undeveloped love? In "Garden Fancies" the love portrayed has reached a later stage of development and yet still is in its dawn, and others of the poems may be classed with these. If you decide that "A Likeness," "St. Martin's Summer," "Youth and Art," "Dis Aliter Visum," "Evelyn Hope," "Too Late" also belong to this class; observe and point out which are the nearest like the first in the slight character of the emotion betrayed; and also

what, besides their general resemblance, are the differences among these in respect to the various circumstances which have checked or determined the development of the initial attraction. "A Likeness," for example, is the veiled expression of a teasing memory of a special personal attraction secretly cherished, which has been called up in the possible lover's mind by such chance incidents as the poem relates, but which no one guesses and which is kept unacknowledged. In all the other poems just mentioned the phases of love shown have been affected by obstacles of various sorts. In "Youth and Art," and "Dis Aliter Visum" the dawning attraction of the lovers for one another has been checked in its development by worldly considerations. In "Evelyn Hope" the death, and in "Too Late" the marriage and at last the death of the beloved woman have hindered the lovers' avowals, but instead of being strong enough to check the development of feeling, they have served instead to awaken the lover to a more poignant realization of its nature and promise. In "St. Martin's Summer" quite another sort of obstacle thwarts the development of the awakening attraction. The remembrance of a deep and rich love, now past, besides which any other seems but an imitation and pale reflection, intervenes like a ghost to cast over the present love a shadow of discredit. "Which?" "Numpholeptos," "A Pretty Woman," belong in a class by themselves because they seem rather to be concerned with the idea of love than with a specific personal impression. Therefore, it will be well to discuss these more particularly under the following topic. But of all the other poems cited in this group, do any express a phase of love which has been left

dormant or has reached little more than a nascent stage? If you think none do, you may class the rest together as expressive of fully awakened love, and then consider under what different conditions this love is manifested; and also, what various phases of love are portrayed, as jealous love in "The Laboratory," betrayed love in "The Confessional," subjected love in "A Woman's Last Word," specious love in "A Light Woman," and love triumphing over obstacles of various sorts, or affected by them more or less fatally in the others.

Which of these poems are the more complex in their *personnel*? For example, in some of the poems of both of these two classes of latent and awakened love, the expression of love the poem gives involves nobody but the two lovers. In others it is the entrance of the outer world upon the scene, either in the shape of other persons who actually take a part in the poem or of personal considerations which affect it indirectly, or merely as an external influence in the mind of the lover, which occasions or qualifies the outpouring of expression. Again, it may be noticed that this entrance of external influences under these different guises leads to various effects: it may help to make the love stronger or more conscious, or may tend to create the difficulties which beset its development.

Illustrate in the poems the different varieties of movement in the story and the ways in which the love and its expression is accordingly affected. Other actors besides the lovers, outer influences too, for instance, thwart the love and make it lead to tragical conclusions in a large group of these poems, — "The Confessional," "The Laboratory," "In a Gondola," "Porphyria's Lover," "In a Balcony," "Cristina

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and Monaldeschi." In what respects does "A Light Woman" belong to this group, and wherein does it differ from it? In which among these poems are the lovers affected by the outer influence so that they themselves share in bringing about the tragedy, and thus add to the emotional intensity? Outer influences of still another class make both the rapturous mood and the actual separation between the lovers in "Love among the Ruins" and "Bifurcation." Ideals of duty, in the one case, based upon social life, intervene to disjoin the lovers, and in the other the intrusion upon their happiness of the larger social life and the imposing achievements of the past but serves to make felt the more vitally their intensely human and merely personal emotion. "Solomon and Balkis" classes with these poems in the one respect that it touches on the effect of self-indulgence and worldly importance upon a personal relation. It satirizes the sort of love-susceptibility growing in a vitiated way from such roots of external influence, and shows its merely physical quality. Again in "Rosny" an external ideal of fame and honor uses love as its instrument and sends the lover to his death. In "Two in the Campagna" a mood of the subtlest nature intervenes between the lovers. It is an external influence that is absolutely immaterial and impersonal, felt to belong to the infinite, because so vague and large and elusive, and yet interposing a nameless bafflement upon the human yearning to encompass all within its love. In "Mesmerism" personal love is brought into a similar subtle contact with mysterious influences which it would subordinate to the service of personal desire to the extent of gaining a dominance felt to be an unlawful usurpation over the loved one's will. Compare with

these poems of conflict between love and external influences of some sort, the little group of poems expressing the conflict of love with the merely personal disagreements and selfishnesses of the lovers—"A Lovers' Quarrel," "A Woman's Last Word," "Another Way of Love," and "In a Year," noticing how in all of these discord arises, and how far it goes towards either the destruction of love, the subjugation of one personality by the other, or a reaction of one against the other. "The Lost Mistress," "A Serenade," "Cristina," "Mary Wollstonecraft," and "The Last Ride Together" are alike in relating nothing of the external or internal sources of friction disturbing the love-relation, and in expressing in various ways the triumph of love over all slights and without self-abasement in the soul of the rejected lover. Notice throughout these poems how far they make known the different points of view of the two lovers concerned and also how the selfish subjugation of one by the other, as in "A Woman's Last Word," does not permit the attainment of such strength and psychological victory on the part of the less loved lover as the spiritual isolation of the lover in "Cristina."

"One Way of Love" and "Another Way of Love," also "In Three Days" and "In a Year," seem to have been written as companion poems expressing supplementary phases of love, the one pair of poems presenting the opposite points of view toward love of two different kinds of lovers; the second pair, of two points of view, the one a man's, the other the woman's, in the history of what may have been the same love, affected by time and change. It is a woman who speaks in "In a Year;" but is it justifiable to suppose that in these two contrasted poems

the two points of view are compared and meant to be characteristic of any woman's and any man's nature, or does Browning's treatment of love forbid the supposition that it is always the man who is inconstant? Is he right or mistaken in this? In the lover of "Cristina" and of "One Way of Love" has he portrayed an attitude of constancy and purely psychical love maintained without any return and in the face of neglect which would be impossible in a man? Compare with "Mary Wollstonecraft." Compare with Browning's other rejected lovers.

Queries for Discussion. — Is Browning's treatment of love characterized by a wider range and greater complexity than is usual in love-poems? Compare as to range and complexity with any modern poets; for example, William Morris, Tennyson, Emerson, Whitman, Lowell, Poe, Kipling, etc.

It has been said by some who have admitted the wider range of Browning that his very variety is a sign of a certain aloofness of the poet from the emotions he depicts; that they are not his direct emotions, but his exploited emotions, the personal basis all art must have being deflected and rearranged to suit the imagined points of view of different souls; and that they are, therefore, externalized and shaped too much by the intellect, the outcome growing too cold to stir us. As Dr. Brinton says (see "Facettes of Love from Browning," *Poet-lore*, Vol. I. pp. 1-28, Jan., 1889), "We can find many powerful and trenchant portrayals of passion in his pages, yet his lines rarely cause to vibrate a similar chord in the human heart." This writer concludes that his love poems fail to touch the heart and that they fail because "his intellectual nature constantly interferes with the full and free ex-

pression of the emotions," his theory of dramatic workmanship excluding direct self-expression, his public feels the poet's detachment, and the falsity of a theory of art which involves a sensitive shyness on the part of the poet himself.

But is it true that Browning's love poems do not touch his readers? Have they a quality of their own, which, although it may be discriminated as different in kind as well as in degree and variety from the poems of most other poets, is neither inferior in force and ardor, nor without an underlying basis of genuine and vital personal experience? If they have a recognizable quality of this nature can the theory of art which would exclude his theory as defective be held to without narrowness? Would not a theory of art which recognized the inherent value of the two methods, of both the direct and the indirect use in art of personal experience, be the better to hold to, and justify the conclusion that the art decried, instead of being wrong, was an accession to literature of a rare and original sort? But is it altogether unprecedented? Are there prototypes of this variety in other dramatic art? Is not the intellect, as well as experience, of right, an element in the transmuting of personality into a work of art?

Dr. Brinton sums up his view as follows: "The living presence of this emotional personality is the secret of the perennial attraction of the very greatest works of art; and the artist who deliberately rejects this will never touch that chord which makes the whole world kin, nor achieve his own best possible results." May the truth in this statement be admitted and yet made reconcilable with the recognition in Browning's poems of an emotional personality

livingly present but moulded and controlled to suit an artistic purpose, building "broad on the roots of things," or is it true that he "deliberately rejects" the emotional personality and "will never touch that chord," etc.?

Does a poet, on the other hand, who limits his work to the expression of a personal experience, also limit his appreciation to the understanding of a person who has had a similar experience, and so run a greater risk of limitation and growing out of date than a poet who broadens his work in line with larger and differentiated experience?

Is the merely subjective class of poetical work more permanent and powerful in its effects and fame than the dramatic and the epic?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*

— The Ideals of Love Implied in the Poems.

Hints:— Can you derive from this series of poems some definition of love, as you think the poet must have conceived of it in order to have written of love in all of them just as he has? Are they ever contradictory? and if they are consistent in a general way, in what does their unity, and in what do their differences consist?

The differences in the quality of the love in "The Laboratory" and in "Cristina and Monaldeschi" seem to be utterly opposed to the love poured forth regardless of slight or resentment in "A Serenade," "One Way of Love," "Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli," or "Cristina." Yet one is neither induced to blame the revengeful little lady who so gloats over the prospect of poisoning her magnificent rival, or to withhold a certain sympathy from the justice in the wronged Cristina's revenge upon her ungrateful lover, at the

same time that one appreciates the steadfast purity of the love of Pauline's lover, the utterly self-regardless strength of Mary Wollstonecraft's love, or the ecstatic victory in the persistency of the love of the lover of Cristina. If the reader be inclined to blame or to feel distaste for any of these different ways of loving it is rather to be attributed to his own prejudices than to any bias Browning shows.

How then can any predilection on the poet's part be perceived? Can it be assumed that his sympathy goes out to all sorts of genuine feeling, whether leading to commendable results and happy social relations or not? All such considerations, although not without an importance of their own, are apparently secondary, in any instance, to the supreme importance of the service of love to the lover through the revelation it affords him of his essential nature, any kind of real love being a possible initiation into a disciplinary spiritual process.

The differences to be noted, then, in the ideals of love in these poems, if this general theory is accepted, are those that belong actually to real life, to different characters under different circumstances, the underlying unity being the worth of all sorts of such emotions and experiences in the development of the individual soul. How will such an hypothesis suit throughout all these poems? Can you find any that fits these various poems better?

This one will account for the inclusion of such penetrating expositions of merely physical passion and triumphs of vengefulness as those of the fierce little French lady of "The Laboratory," and such extremely subtle spiritual yearnings for mastery over another and such triumphs of self-refrain as those of

the self-contained lover of "Mesmerism." The first ideal of love, in "The Laboratory," is in its own way as legitimately the outcome of a crude nature, driven by the goad of its own sensations, affected by circumstances and the environment of the time, and open to its special temptations, as the other, in "Mesmerism," is of a highly developed psychical nature aspiring ambitiously to work out its inmost potencies of spiritual yearning, and to assert over another an undue spiritual aggression; but instead of wreaking itself out selfishly as in the first case, it finds a new channel for its love and desire in a final impulsion towards that ardent respect for the spiritual rights of the loved one which is the highest fruit of love and desire on the psychical basis.

Why is it, do you suppose, that Browning has treated of jealousy so slightly, and of male jealousy not at all? For even Guido, in "The Ring and the Book," who pretends to be jealous, is not so. He acts in a way he could not if he really were so. Considering how the jealous husband is reiterated in Shakespeare, and in literature, generally, it would seem that Browning must have been conscious of his own abstention from this theme. Perhaps he avoided it because he desired to treat of love freshly and without imitation; perhaps he had the deeper reason that it was not a prominent feeling in his own experience — at any rate, in its extremest forms of vengefulness against either the rival or the one supposed to be fickle; — and so he had, instinctively and naturally, no desire to treat that which he could not so well render penetratingly. Perhaps violent jealousy is a sentiment that belongs more especially to marriage and to that institution as it was formerly regulated, or to relations

where there has been a sense of assured possession on which suspicion is afterward cast. However that may be, it is interesting to notice, in this group of poems (which excludes, for convenience, the illustrations of married life to be discussed later) that the emotions excited toward a rival are not intense or malevolent, save in "The Laboratory," and that the treatment of it there seems to take it for granted that such an emotion is a primitive one. In "Cristina and Monaldeschi," Cristina's jealousy is mixed with a nobler rage; in fact she is not represented as desirous to do any wrong against her rival, and although she might resent the rival's favor with Monaldeschi, she is not made to punish him for this merely, but is made to resent chiefly the indignity to herself wrought by his insincerity and untrustworthiness. Her own pain half rises from the consciousness of her own nobility, — the loyalty and generousness of heart which has been cheated of its deserts. More than all it rises from her power, as a queen, to take upon herself the liberty of pronouncing sentence and assuaging her sense both of degradation and injustice. This power of judging and punishing will, one may foresee, recoil upon her later, to harden her heart in a triumph of justice, if not to torture it with mercy.

Which of these two poems "The Laboratory" or "Cristina and Monaldeschi" is the more skilful portrayal of jealousy? And where does each fall in the evolutionary scale upon which Browning has built his different ideals of love? Can it be said that the lady of "The Laboratory" has an ideal of love? What should you say Cristina's was?

Two opposite ideals of love are designedly contrasted in "One Way of Love" and "Another Way

of Love." The lover in the first poem sustains the pain of feeling that Pauline cares nothing for anything he can do to pleasure her, accepts the bitter conclusion that no charm can ever reside for her in his expression of his love for her, and yet, unrequited as his love is, he not only persists in it so far as he himself is concerned, but believes in the blessedness of such love, were it possible under happier conditions. The lover of "Another Way of Love," on the other hand, tires of the very perfection of the love conferred upon him and even while it is still in the bud doubts whether it is not as indifferent as his own love is. The genuineness of emotion that the one believes in, the other not merely finds tiresome but rates low. The first lover's ideal of love exalts the psychical element in it, so that he has something left for himself alone to hold to, even if his love be not requited. The other belittles love, and, seeing in it but a temporary amusement or passing gratification, he gets nothing but boredom even out of a love that is requited. The retort of the unappreciated beloved one, in commenting upon this standpoint, suggests, as the outpouring of Pauline's does, that whether love is a gain or not depends rather upon what the lover himself thinks love to be, than upon what reward it offers him. The situation, she seems to say "is for you as you feel it. Out of the June weather and surfeit of sweetness go you must to such artificial shut-within-doors joys as you prefer, after all." It is just the June season, as it were, of assured love which "tries a man's temper" and shows his mettle. As for that love which he does not appreciate, the assured and not yet fully ripened love and beauty for which the lady stands, is there not a potency retained within that which is capable of devel-

oping in its own way ? Shall this not grow after its own fashion, according to its own nature, and either prepare for itself a due revenge, or make itself amends for the lack of appreciation accorded it. This sweetness and redness, of whose eternal sameness the lover complains, may thus, without changing, indeed, in a sense, yet effect a certain change in the relations of the pair which will give the more active love the advantage. So it may be said, that in this way June may grow new roses to repair the beauty of the bower this lover has defaced ; and doing this, whatever effort it may cost her, and in spite of him, this richer love of the lady will have accomplished something well worth while. And if, following thus the law of her own life toward the ideal her love sees, her love shall grow on to a delicious perfection of fullness and ripeness, she may then be in a position to consider whether she shall choose one who will be equal to appreciating such a love and adequate to give hers a really reciprocal devotion in return, or whether, acting upon the bitter experience she has had, she will learn how to repel any approach, and using her own natural weapons with added skill and an artfulness whose capability this knowledge of him has developed, punish and stop any further such deprecations.

Does your interpretation of this poem agree with this one ? What does the poet mean by "June" — the lady or the lady's love, or the opportunity open for an ideal love-relation or love-influence ? And what is meant by "June-lightning" ? "A woman never sacrifices herself but once," says Mrs. Linden in Ibsen's "Doll's House." Having learned once by such bitter experience as the lady of "Another Way of

Love" gains or anticipates from a love already giving sign of breaking down, she learns how to be more wary the next time, and becomes herself an active foreseeing agent in love, either for good or for evil. So, acting on her experience of "man and of spider" she may use such sudden passion storms as are incident to the season of love, as to the season of June, in order to clear scores with this nonchalant lover and stop any fresh devastation with blasting spirit lightning. In love's fruition, in the blossom "June wears on her bosom, lie such revenges and such vengeance for slights or scorn of a love once indulged in, as that which Alphonse Daudet warned his sons against when he wrote "Sapho" for them.

How would you sum up the outcome of these two little poems, "One Way of Love" and "Another Way of Love"? The one poem represents a psychical and the other a physical effect of love upon the men lovers. How is it as to the women? The lover who desires the more is, in the second poem, the woman. Pauline we know of merely as the loved one, and of her point of view we know only from the speaker that she does not love him; but of the standpoint of the lady of "Another Way of Love" we know even more than we do of the lover of Pauline. In her conscious weighing of the situation and the possibilities of this love relation for her, and her action in consequence, whether the love may be shaped to this or that spiritual result, — in all this there is a tendency toward an impersonal expression of what love may be made to yield which makes her one of the most interesting examples of Browning's exalted types of ill-requited lovers. She uses her special experience to weigh the worth of love. "In a Year,"

also, in showing the attitude toward love of an ill-requited woman lover, may be instanced as belonging to the same class as "Cristina," since its final stanza leads to the similar conclusion that unsuccessful love is a doorway to spiritual perception of the Infinite beyond the Human.

Mr. Nettleship, however, in the chapter in his volume on Browning's Poems on Love, cites "Another Way of Love" among the poems showing the effect of successful love upon man, but ignores it as showing the effect of ill-requited love upon a woman. Speaking of poems which relate to the effect upon the woman of her love being despised, he says this situation "is only twice delineated," namely in "The Laboratory" and "In a Year," and he goes on to say that "in the poems which relate to the woman's feelings we notice principally (where her love is returned) an absorption of her spirit into that of the man, a blind clinging to some idea of God as formed through education and association merely, and an absolute want of originality and of power to look at the passion of love in an abstract sense outside the woman herself and her lover."

Is this reference to "In a Year," as evidence of "a blind clinging to some idea of God," etc., quite just to the conclusion of that poem? How completely is this statement justified by the woman's power in "Another Way of Love," to look at love in the abstract?

It is desirable to inquire, also, if so sweeping a conclusion is to be made as to the characteristics of all Browning's women lovers, whether other poems or plays, although not included in this programme, confirm Mr. Nettleship. One play alone, published more

than ten years before "Another Way of Love" and most of the love-lyrics here considered, "The Return of the Druses," supplies a good contrary argument in the figure of Anael. Her character, in respect especially to her sensitive testing of the quality of her own and Djabal's love, is made the turning-point of the action. Again the capacity for withholding her own predilections and testing the love of two men, which is shown by Eulalia in "A Soul's Tragedy" (1848), opens Mr. Nettleship's conclusion to further question, when he says that "In none [of the love poems] which relate to the women do we observe the width of view and intellectual power which are attributed to the male lover."

Is Miss Scudder's opposite view better justified than Mr. Nettleship's or not when she says: "Love is indeed to all these women supreme; but that love has a broader outlook than the personal and limited horizon of their relations to their lovers. Intense and passionate as this may be, there is in Browning no noble woman who does not look beyond, and see in the love whereby her own life is ruled, only the type and symbol of the broader bond which unites the world. The intuitive perception of abstract right, of the workings of the moral law, is the innate quality of all Browning's women. Bitter is the suffering when the personal love clashes with the universal righteousness. . . . Love, narrow and individual in its first and most common manifestation, broadens in noble natures into the deeper desire for service; with all true souls it rises at last into the link between the human and the Divine. . . . Thus inevitably and in simple consistency Browning gives his supreme reverence to women. Because of their moral pre-eminence he attributes to

them a special office in life, "at once to inspire and to serve." (See "Womanhood in Modern Poetry," *Poet-lore*, Vol. I., pp. 449-465, October, 1889.)

Is there more variety of nature and a wider range of development indicated for the women than for the men in these poems? Note the cruder passion of the woman in "The Laboratory," compared with the cool power of judging the value of love shown by the woman in "The Glove," and in "Another Way of Love," and, again, the spiritually refined and utterly devoted love of Mary Wollstonecraft and the heroine of "In a Year." Is there as wide a range of difference between Porphyria's lover and Cristina's?

Is there a tendency, in showing the effects of love on men in these poems, to create types whose love is so eminently a psychical force and so independent of rejection or misfortune that they are unusual elsewhere in English literature and distinctive of Browning? The evidence supplied by an outline study of the rejected lover as he or she appears in old ballads and novels suggests that it was considered ridiculous and weak for a man to persist in loving despite bad treatment or without return, while for a woman it was pathetic and fine. Compare the love of Chaucer's patient Griselda, and the Nut-brown Maid of that ballad, with Romeo's love for Rosalind, Juliet's predecessor, in Shakespeare, and in Brooke's "Palace of Pleasure," the story Shakespeare followed.

"There was little room in the position of woman in knightly society for a recognition of any other than a physical interest in love and a physical end, until, through higher ideals of the demands of the individual soul there had been developed a higher plane of life. The speakers in Browning's 'One Way of Love,'

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'The Last Ride Together,' and 'Cristina,' above all Valence in 'Colombe's Birthday,' represent a modern ideal of the psychical worth of passion,—an ideal developed from the feudal notions of love through greatly changed social conditions." (See remarks on this subject in *Poet-lore*, Vol. II., pp. 37–38, January, 1890.)

On the other hand, in the more sophisticated social life of Southern Europe at the earliest dawn of the Renaissance period, ideals of romantic love were held by the choicer spirits among the Neoplatonists, and notably by Dante, which bear an affinity to those expressed by Browning's exalted lovers. From the conception of love given to the world by Plato the finer side of the romantic love of early chivalry grew, in the Middle Ages, through the admixture of a new idea of the worth both of woman and the spiritual in humanity. This fresh admixture was due in part to Christianity and the influence upon civilization of the Northern races and their more normal habits of life; and, through this admixture, romantic love seems to have been brought, as Mr. Cooke says, "to its highest expression in Dante and Petrarch, and revived in a modernized form by Browning." Plato "imaginatively proves that love is the great mediator, the eternal reconciler, between severed human souls . . . yearned for with the soul's utmost intensity, because it is an anticipation, albeit indistinct, of an ideal union. . . . With the later poets, especially of the Anthology, we come upon some lyric . . . so unlike all that has gone before in the Greek conception of woman, and the love between the sexes, that we cannot but see it is a new thing. . . . It came to its perfection in the troubadours, in chivalry, and in Dante . . . The mediæval

interpreters of romantic love turned to Plato as the great teacher of its doctrines and spirit; but they made the recipient of the love the source of inspiration rather than the lover himself, as with Plato. . . . Dante said that Beatrice had revealed to him all virtue and all wisdom. Petrarch blessed the happy moment which directed his heart to Laura, for she led him to the path of virtue." (See "Browning's Interpretation of Romantic Love, as compared with that of Plato, Dante, and Petrarch," *Poet-lore*, Vol. VI., pp. 225-238.)

In speaking of Plato's idea of love, although pointing out that it was the love of man for man rather than the love of man and woman which concerned him, Mr. Cooke refers to the parable in "the Symposium" (see Jowett's "Plato's Dialogues," Vol. I., pp. 483-486), relating how man was originally created in the shape of a ball with four hands and feet and two faces, and later was split in half to make the two sexes, — hence love being the desire of man for unity and the whole; but this story, it should be remembered, is told in character by Aristophanes, and the sexual point of view it involves is opposed by Socrates, whose teaching may be abridged as follows for comparison with Dante and Browning: —

Diotima, say Socrates, taught him that "love may be described generally as the love of the everlasting possession of the good" or the love of and birth in beauty. "All men are bringing to the birth in their bodies and in their souls," because, "to the mortal, birth is a sort of eternity and immortality . . . and all men will necessarily desire immortality together with good, if love is of the everlasting possession of the good." She explained to him, further, how the mortal body partakes of immortality by "undergoing a perpetual

process of loss and reparation," the "old worn-out mortality leaving another new and similar one behind," but the "immortal partakes of immortality in another way. . . . Creative souls — for there are men who are more creative in their souls than in their bodies — conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive." (See Jowett's "Dialogues of Plato: The Symposium," Vol. I., passages quoted, pp. 498-501.) Again in the "Phædrus" (Vol. I., pp. 557, 558, 570), love is described by Socrates as a madness or ecstasy, but of two kinds, one produced by "human infirmity, the other by a divine release from the ordinary ways of men," and this sort of ecstasy belongs to the immortal soul which is self-moving, never failing of self or of motion, self-motion being "the very idea and essence of the soul. . . . The body which is moved from without is soulless; but that which is moved from within has a soul . . . without beginning and immortal." In this highest madness of the soul, the sight of the beauty of earth is a transport of recollection of true beauty, beheld in another world. Whoever feels it "would like to fly away, but cannot." He is "like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below," the object of his affections being chosen according to the desire of his soul for a soul that has had a like nature and revered the same god, to whom their recollection clings, of whom "they become possessed," and "receive his character and ways as far as man can participate in God."

The lover of "Cristina" holds a like resistless faith in a remembered twinship of soul with the beloved one; and the lover of "Evelyn Hope" seeks satisfaction in a similar mystical realm of spiritual being.

"Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli," is an expression of the outgrowth from platonic love toward the warmer, thoroughly romantic, and yet exalted devoted love which belongs peculiarly to the chivalric vein of the troubadour lover; and others of Browning's romantic poems exemplify, with historic fidelity, this especial phase of romantic love. (See Helen Leal Reed's "Browning's Pictures of Chivalry," *Poet-love* Vol. XI., pp. 588-601.)

Summing up the ground passed over, together with the few poems of this series still remaining to be surveyed, it may be noticed that the whole has naturally arranged itself in three general groups: the first, covering the poems already named and discussed, which express the effect of a personal experience, whether happy or not, upon the lover. The second group expresses the lover's judgment of an experience, less recent, his thought lingering reflectively over it and weighing its value not merely to himself, or to his soul, or to the beloved one, as in the first group, but in relation to outside considerations. "A Light Woman," "Dîs Aliter Visum," "Confessions," "Youth and Art," "Bifurcation," "Rosny," deal thus with the relation of a love-experience to the moral or conventional opinions of the outside world. The third group—embracing "A Pretty Woman," "Numpholeptos," "Solomon and Balkis," "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," "Which?"—expresses in a more abstract way, as if in a parable embodying a veiled but intended meaning, some comment on love in general, or on typical love relations between men and women.

In "A Light Woman" the speaker has ventured to interfere in the relations of his friend with an objectionable woman from whom it seemed desirable

rescue him, and the meddler's success only leads him to bitter reflections on his own presumption and the fact that he himself is the least to be commended of the three. Is the ideal of love to be drawn from this poem that love belongs essentially to the two souls concerned and should not be subject to the offhand condemnation and interference of those outside the relationship? And observe whether such a conception agrees with the ideals implied as to the opinions of the outer world in the other poems of this second group. In "Dis Aliter Visum" and "Youth and Art" the worthlessness of external views of the socially fit way to act in life are arraigned by the two speakers as leading to less good moral results than the indulgence of love despite social unfitness. The argument against suppression of the impulse to love seems to be that there is a vitality about obedience to a genuine emotion of love compared with which conventional inconvenience is not only petty but nullifying, since the nature schools itself in deference to such cautions only to grow insincere and fall a prey to degenerate relations which are destructive of spiritual impetus, not only for the characters of the two first concerned but for those with whom these become involved. In "Bifurcation" a similar question is posed between love and a course thought good socially, and this question is left open. The intimation with which it closes is, says Dr. Brinton (see "Browning on Unconventional Relations," *Poet-love*, Vol. IV., May, 1892, pp. 266-271), "that self-denial may be a greater sin than self-indulgence." In "Confessions" a dying man maintains the joy and sweetness of an old love episode against the ascetic notion of it as a dangerous and doubtful inclination of the flesh. Finally, in "Rosny,"

the desire to gratify public opinion with the fame of a warrior-hero leads love to sacrifice his life to it.

So in all the poems of this group there is an antithesis between love and social opinion, and all tend toward the conclusion that love is closer to spirituality, and is to the individuals concerned in each case, therefore, a better guide than the external opinions of the social world.

In tracing the ideals of love embodied in these poems through the last group, ask whether, in these most critical and quizzical of Browning's love poems, there is any disagreement with the foregoing group. In "A Pretty Woman" the conclusion expressed is even so far respectful of the individual nature and the right to follow its own bent that its incapacity to love deeply, although accompanied by an exasperating facility to attract love, is acknowledged, and neither irritation nor forcible possession is justified, but rather such mere appreciation as that shown a rose one admires but leaves to itself unplucked and unsullied. "Numpholeptos" expresses the devotion of the male lover to the woman he has made an idol of. He bends himself to the performance of the superhuman demands this unreal woman-shape lays upon him. And the slavishness of the man to the hopeless and stultifying action which she is incapable of entering into or really rewarding is the legitimate result, the poem suggests, of this sort of fetichism in the relations of men and women. It is ignorance of actual life which makes her exacting, and it is his worship which makes her artificially queen it over him as his moral superior. The ideal of love, insinuated symbolically, through the unsatisfactoriness of the relationship between this lover and his task-mistress, which the poem satirically exposes, is probably that, in place of this

sort of fantastic, sentimental, unbalanced ensnarement of the man by the woman, a more perfectly reciprocal and healthy relationship may grow up between them when they have become equally independent and self-poised by actual contact with the real problems of life and hard-won triumphs over them. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IX., Notes, p. 301, for Browning's explanation of his meaning; also, passage on "Numpholeptos" in "The Ideals of Womanhood held by Browning," *Poet-lore*, Vol. IX., No. 3, p. 399.) Mrs. Glazebrook (see "Browning Studies," pp. 195-203) writes of the allegory of the nymph in this poem as suggesting three alternatives: "She may be just some one individual woman, and the poem a simple love story told in allegorical form. . . . But the whole tone, style, and effect of the poem seem to me to forbid this narrow interpretation. . . . Browning tells stories of this kind simply, dramatically, circumstantially. . . . Secondly, the nymph may be the personification of Philosophy. And this I believe her to be in part. But I think she is more. There must be some good reason for that outburst at the end, which makes so much of her being a woman — of her 'She-intelligence,' etc. . . . And so I am brought to the third alternative, which is the one I hold. The nymph is the ideal woman — a modern Beatrice or Laura," dwelling "in a carefully guarded abode of peace and virtue," sending forth the man to make his way in life's careers, always exacting victory for him in these, "but not the stains and scars of the victor." These her untried experience of life does not permit her to understand. So also "Solomon and Balkis" satirizes the male vanity and the feminine love of allurements under which sensuality may mask as love.

"Adam, Lilith, and Eve" exemplifies the typical man in a similar mutually self-fooling relationship with the two typical classes of women, Lilith, the proud but loyal-hearted Brunhild type, Eve, the softer but wilier Gudrun type. (See Mrs. Corson's Note, however, *Poet-lore*, Vol. VIII., pp. 278-280, for an interpretation diametrically opposite to this and to the one given in the digest of this poem, *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. XI., p. 327.) Finally, "Which?" in presenting dramatically the ideals of love held by three different women seems to sum up this topic of Ideals of Love, by indicating that the most essential requirement in a lover is that his love shall have reference to one alone.

Queries for Discussion.—To what extent are Browning's love-poems dramatic, and to what extent does there exist an agreement among them which enables one to judge what ideals of love guided him?

Is Mr. Stedman justified in speaking of Browning's love lyrics as "attesting the boundless liberty and sovereignty of love," so that their "moral is that . . . the greatest sin does not consist in giving rein to our desires, but in stinting or too prudently repressing them"? (See "Victorian Poets," pp. 322, 329.) If there is truth in this, what limitation of its application, generally, should be made on the score of the poet's satire in his more quizzical poems of spurious love-relations and of his exemplifications throughout his work of developed love as essentially spiritual?

Is it an advance, morally and socially, that the men lovers should be shown to be capable of such disinterested love as it was formerly supposed only women were likely to express?

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What elements of the love celebrated, typically, by Plato and Dante belong to Browning's most exalted lovers, and wherein has he added a strain of his own? Is his conception of the value of love to the soul of the lover more in accord, on the whole, with Dante's reverence for woman, or with Plato's lonely regard for the spiritual and individual element of love which the Greek philosophy identified with the lover instead of with the beloved one?

Is the ideal of love held by Browning's exalted lovers as social in its aim as Mr. Nettleship supposes when he writes as follows:—

“Should we consider the conclusions of Browning's male lovers as one whole, what use can we make of them, when thus blended? If we believe with Cristina's lover, that we are here in this life, as distinguished from all other lives before and after, for the purpose of loving somebody; with Evelyn Hope's lover, that, having fulfilled that condition here, we shall surely enjoy it to the full in some future state; and with the lover in ‘The Last Ride,’ that it is possible that love enjoyed may be, not only one fulfilment of a future state, but that fruition which is more glorious and all-satisfying than any other, we do but intensify powers of which we are assuredly possessed, and by the very nature of our hopes for their exercise, elevate and purify our desires. Finding ourselves possessed of certain instincts, whose development is the passion of love, and which claim exercise in one way or another; . . . finding that not only as reproductive agents are these instincts in themselves of incalculable importance, but, moreover, that in their exercise for that purpose they expand our sympathetic powers, and nourish and extend the power of action of our other

attributes ; we do but take another step, to learn first that perhaps the passion is but a symbol of the infinite yearning of a first cause, a type of that boundless love which, wedded to boundless power, has been imagined as the all-ruling Deity ; and then that this very passion, infinitely extended, may be the means of our helping untold millions as God's vice-gerents in other existences. . . . If we believe that no love which has honestly sprung up in any man's breast can go unrewarded altogether, lest thereby so much power be lost in the machine of the universe ; if we thus dare to weld together the thoughts expressed in these three poems, . . . who shall say whether the little germ of one man's love truly begun, for one woman, may not in some far-away life arise, an infinite passion, by whose glowing-impulse the two shall mount upwards ? And if for many lives he and she toil on, failing, learning, and accumulating force . . . surely at last, when . . . division and duality are things of forgotten ages, the perfect human entity, taking throne at the foot of God, will wield the sceptre of power, instinct with the spirit of love, over the millions who are still toiling and climbing, and in the end the whole world will blend in the inconceivable splendor of a star that blazes through an ever present eternity ! ”

How does this way of regarding love accord with Browning's ? Should you say that these poems placed emphasis on the spiritual side of love, regarding it as essentially emotional and transcendent ? And is this view too much influenced by the idea of reproduction and too biassed by notions of institutional, even monarchical, forms of government to be perfectly in harmony with the poet ? Does love as Browning conceives of it fulfil itself through personality, in order

ultimately to establish the highest consciousness of the individual soul, and therefore, instead of blending all souls into likeness and unity, merely, as Mr. Nettleship supposes, does it, rather, branch into complexity and differentiation, in order to realize new power and make new sympathies possible?

Is it likelier that greater injustice will be done the poet by defining his ideal of love and giving it a prescribed goal, than by regarding his love poems as an artist's attempts to embody human ideals of an evolutionary sort having a relative rather than an absolute value, and expressing a general tendency rather than a specific aim? Might his position toward his own poems be that of one who held that although an absolute ideal of perfect love would be desirable for man to aspire toward, yet that it would be undesirable for any one man to limit it for others or himself, no one nature's experience and aspiration absorbing all the possibilities, and each such experience and aspiration being but a relative manifestation or partial mirroring of the imagined Infinite — "Infinite Passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn"?

Is romantic love to Browning a renunciation or a realization of personality? Is self-sacrifice or self-satisfaction, soul-development or social progress its master impulse? But are such ends as these opposed or supplementary? Does self-sacrifice lead to soul development; or does it cramp the active energies of the spiritual nature and induce a passivity unfriendly to progress? Does self-satisfaction, on the other hand, — the wreaking of oneself on one's desires, — tend to satiate and, in a sense, debauch the energy, giving it the restlessness of over-activity? If in either way danger lies, where may the remedy be found?

Is the solution a middle-way or a reference of the question as to conduct, in each case, to the dictates of the individual soul in relation to its special environment? Does soul development depend upon social progress the more, or social progress create the better conditions for soul development?

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — The Poetic Workmanship.

Hints : — It is interesting to notice that the four-stressed measure predominates in this series of poems. At least twenty-two of the thirty-nine poems are written in this way, and perhaps one other poem, "Cristina," should be added to the number, for it is ordinarily so scanned. Whether metrical facility or poverty of ability as a metricist is betokened by the evidence that this four-stressed measure is so often used, may be in part determined by a study of the differentiation the poet has made in this kind of line in these poems, and of how he has manipulated it to meet the dramatic or emotional effects attained.

"Garden Fancies" is half taken up with description of a past scene in a garden, and yet it is all the time more directly presentative of the describer. While he talks we see that he is pushing open the wicket gate, and passing successively past the shrub, the box along one side of the gravel walk, the phlox, the roses in a row, the flower with the Spanish name, — all of them recalling to him incidents of the past scene when he walked through the garden with the lady who then made all these incidents enchanting and who now, as he catches sight of her, farther on, makes him hurry off toward her, flinging back, as he goes, after the expressive lines 41 and 42, cautions to the flower and taunts to the roses expressive of this lady's superior

charm. The state of emotional sensibility belonging to this lover comes out in the metaphors. Human feeling is attributed to the hinges, which wince and murmur, the buds "pout" and "flout" and "turn up their faces"; and notice how "sunshine," "sound," "speech," "song," and "beauties" are spoken of as capable of human action, of lingering, sleeping, waking, and fleeing. Referring to line 20 in the "Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett," Elizabeth Barrett speaks of "that beautiful and musical use of the word 'meandering' which I never remember having seen used in relation to sound before." The general tone of the poem is one of smooth grace and delicate sentiment. Observe how the metrical form is related to this effect. Although the four-stressed line opens with an accented syllable for the first four lines, and, similarly, at the beginning of other stanzas, especially v. and vi., where there is an outburst of impulsive rapture, the lines, as a rule, open with unaccented syllables, and often, as in lines 7 and 8, for example, — "the poor snail," "and forget it the leaves," — an extra unstressed syllable lengthens the iambic foot.

In "The Laboratory," the four-stressed line is often begun with a stressed syllable followed by one, and sometimes two, unstressed, the whole giving an entirely opposite effect to that of "The Flower's Name," an effect of abrupt excitability rather than smooth sensibility, of fierceness instead of sentiment. The way the metre serves the emotion it expresses, so that the right rhetorical emphasis is in general agreement with the rhythm, has been noticed particularly by Mr. William Allingham. He points the second stanza for reading, thus: —

"He is with her, and they know that I know
 Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
 While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
 Empty church, to pray God in for them! I am here."

This calls attention to the strong antitheses made between the pronouns, the tears, the laughter, the church where the lovers think the lady is, the laboratory where she really is. Notice, also, the alternation of stressed and unstressed or less stressed syllables as here marked. How far does the sense-emphasis coincide with the metrical stress? Scan the other stanzas, marking the metrical accents in the same way, and inquire whether the lines of this poem are more often opened with a stressed or weak syllable, and if the different effect of the poem as a whole is due to the rhythm being essentially opposite to that of the preceding poem, if it is made up chiefly, that is, of what are called trochaic and dactylic feet (feet of two and three syllables opening with an accented and followed by unaccented syllables); or whether it is made up chiefly of what are called iambic and anapæstic feet (feet of two and three syllables opening with light and followed by stressed syllables), and if the different effect of the whole is due, therefore, simply to the fact that there are in this poem a greater number of lines than in the preceding, which open with a stress. In the case of such lines as 9 it might be held that, although it begins with a strong syllable followed by two weak ones, this foot is not a dactyl, but, as frequently in iambic verse, that the usual opening weak syllable is dropped, and that after "Grind a," a new and reg-

ular iambic foot, "way moist," follows, the rest of the line being made up of two anapæsts.

For the sake of unifying the metre throughout would it be better to scan such lines thus, or to account them as exceptional? Or is Mr. Arthur Beatty right in classing the poem as trochaic and dactylic? In his valuable little pamphlet on "Browning's Verse Form," he instances it as an example of the trochaic logæædic, meaning by this that it is written in the free metre, called logæædic by the Greek prosodists, in which extra syllables were added at will to the foot, dactyls being blent with trochees in the variety called trochaic, and anapæsts with iambs in that called iambic, in a way "combining the unfettered movement of the noblest prose with the true poetic cadence."

The rhyme scheme is simple, the stanza being made up of two couplets. Are the double rhymes effective? Notice the power of speech attributed to the drop of poison (line 31). Is it appropriate that the metaphors should be rare? Had the lady an eye for color? What examples of effective alliteration does the poem afford?

"The Confessional" is the simplest of poems as to metaphor and diction, and most regular as to the rhythm, which is markedly that of a steadily iambic four-stressed line. Are there any elisions of the weak syllables of the foot at the beginning of the lines? What is the rhyme scheme? Are there any double rhymes, such as the "tightly" "whitely," "smithy" "prithce," of "The Laboratory"? What similes are there, and how do these and the bare style suit the speaker?

The verse in "Cristina" may be classed either as four or eight stressed. Each pair of lines, as printed

in the apparently eight-line stanza, really constitutes but one poetic line or verse, each stanza being composed of two couplets ending in double rhymes throughout the poem. It may be questioned whether it might not be better often to scan each line as having three stresses, for example: —

“There are flashes struck from midnights
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,” etc.

instead of

“There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,” etc.

The second mode seems too regular to express the impatient half-injured scornfulness of mood natural to the speaker, who, according to the first mode, would fling headlong past his opening words towards his words of main emphasis. But read the stanzas in the two ways, in the first, letting the voice pass lightly on to “flashes” and “fire” and there marking the stress; in the second, emphasizing the first and then every alternate syllable; and judge for yourself. This first mode would make each line open with a three-syllabled foot of two weak, followed by a strong syllable, that is, with an anapæst, the remainder of the line being a two-syllabled foot, that is, iambic, and the verse, as a whole, a good example of the iambic logæædic metre.

The regular iambic rhythm of the four-stressed verse of “The Lost Mistress,” the simple alternate rhymed quatrain and quiet diction fit the dismissed lover’s gray mood. What he is saying of the eaves and vine-buds intimates that he is standing in the doorway bidding good-bye. What pertinence is there in

his saying that "the red turns gray"? Does this strike him as sadly like his own budding hope?

Is "Evelyn Hope" an unquestionable example of dactylic and trochaic metre? Here, as in the other poems, the lines stressed at the opening are expressive of an agitated emotional outburst, and the lines opening with weak syllables signify the relief of a quieter mood. The last stanza, for example, in effect very serenely solemn, is characterized by an iambic rhythm throughout. Notice the rhyme and stanza scheme. Are there any double rhymes? Observe the nature of the similes and allusions.

Summarize the differences between the remaining poems of four-stressed lines as to variety of rhythm, and new kinds of stanza and rhymes, for example, "Two in the Campagna," closes its stanza of five lines with a shorter line of three stresses which rhymes with the first and third. "Another Way of Love," while each stanza closes with triplet verses having four stresses, has eight lines preceding with four rhymes elaborately interlinked. "A Pretty Woman" has a double rhymed couplet of two stressed lines between its double and sometimes triple rhyming first and fourth lines. "In a Year" has in its eight-lined stanza but two lines, which are four-stressed; the others have two stresses, except the first, which has three. The songs of "In a Gondola" frequently have short lines of two stresses amid the normal four-stressed verse of this poem, and at its close there is a transition for the last seventeen lines to five stresses in the line, marking noticeably the change of mood with the change of metrical movement, as the lovers return, disembark, and the man is surprised and stabbed. Each quatrain of "A Light Woman" closes with a three-stressed

line which knits up the stanza ; and " Confessions " is similarly constructed, so far as its quatrains, in iambic metre closing with a three-stressed line, are concerned, yet it seems to secure its more humorous and crisp effect not merely by the character and similes of the story, which should be observed, but also by there being fewer syllables, generally, to the line. One of the main traits distinguishing " The Last Ride Together " from the many other poems having a four-stressed iambic line is the carefully interlocked rhyme of the eleven-lined stanza. It serves to add an element of rhythm closely corresponding to the movement of thought and emotion as well as a suggestion of horseback-riding. Compare with other poems of Browning's in which horseback-riding is in the rhythmic background : " The Ride from Ghent," " Thro' the Metidja," " Boot, Saddle, to Horse and Away." " It is not possible to be thinking mainly of one's horse, what he is doing, how he is going when it is ' Our Last Ride Together,' mine and hers ! " comments Mr. Bulkeley (see " The Reasonable Rhythm of some of Browning's Poems," London Browning Society Papers). " Though our hearts must throb with our horses' motion, and our thoughts fall into their rhythmic rise and fall, yet the deeper feelings reign here, of love, regret, hope, and it is not always consciously, though ever there, that the horses canter under us ; and yet, since thus we are together, would we than this animal cadence wish for a better heaven ? " Notice that the stanza is made up of two sets of paired couplets, the second set having an additional line repeating its second rhyme, both sets being woven into one piece by the fifth and the last lines rhyming. How do the diction, allusions, and metaphors correspond with the nature of

this lover and reveal his culture and character in comparison, for instance, with those of "Porphyria's Lover;" and what special qualities of its own has the four-stressed line of that poem? Is the four-stressed verse of "Too Late" given an effect quite different from all the preceding poems, and how? Notice the rough yet vivid metaphors (see lines 21-24, 31-36, 43-48, 75 and 76, 100-102, 110-112, and so on) and what they intimate of the kind of man this lover was. "Cristina and Monaldeschi," "Dis Aliter Visum," "Mary Wollstonecraft," "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," "Which?" and "Rosny," the remaining poems of four-stressed lines, have various interesting points of differentiation: either in the preponderance of lines with the stress at the opening syllable, as in the first and last poems, in both cases suiting the tragic intensity; or in the preponderance of lines opening with a weak syllable, as in the other poems; or in the lengthening of the foot, and shortening of some of the lines to three-stressed lines, as in "Adam, Lilith, and Eve;" in adding a two-stressed refrain, as in "Rosny;" or else in the varied rhyme and stanza structure; and in the use of double rhymes.

Of the remainder of this series of love poems, aside from those discussed in the following programme, notice that "A Woman's Last Word," "Love among the Ruins," "A Lover's Quarrel," "Mesmerism," "The Glove," "Youth and Art," "A Likeness," may be grouped together on the basis of all having a three-stressed line. "Solomon and Balkis" is marked by a six-stressed line.

Concerning the congruity existing between the metre and the matter of "A Woman's Last Word," Dr. Brinton writes (see "The New Poetic Form as shown

in Browning," Vol. II., pp. 234-246, May, 1890): "In the short lines . . . we seem to feel the broken, hysterical sobbing of a woman. The primary rhythm is reinforced by the unusual combination of rhyme and repetition, — 'more, Love,' 'before, Love,' etc., while the secondary rhythm is carried on by an adroit disposition of consonantal tone-colors, contrasted at what we may call the close of each sob, — that is, carried through, but not beyond the shorter line. The whole poem is a model effort to bring poetic form into rhythmical co-ordination with the natural physical expression of the emotion it describes." And he calls attention to "the difference in treatment of a quite contrasted mental state, as shown in that exquisite composition 'Love among the Ruins.' The emotion is that of a confident lover walking leisurely at eve to a trysting spot among the ruins where his girl awaits him. Precisely the same measure is used for the shorter verse; but, by a lengthening of the alternate line, and a different adjustment of the secondary rhythm, the whole effect is not merely altered but inverted. Instead of being a reflection of the rhythm of broken sobs, it is that of long and calm inspirations with alternate rests."

An interesting variation from the agile double rhymes that characterize "The Glove," should not be overlooked. When the lady speaks to Ronsard so earnestly, these change into single rhymes, recurring afterwards to their normal dexterity. Elizabeth Barrett wrote Browning, in the "Letters": "What a noble lion you give us, too, with the 'flash on his forehead' and 'leagues in the desert already' as we look . . . and with what a 'curious felicity' you turn the subject 'glove' to another use and strike De Lorge's blow

back on him with it, in the last paragraph of your story ! And the versification ! And the lady's speech — so calm and proud — yet a little bitter."

"Mesmerism" should not be passed over without noticing especially the suspension of the sense and rhythm through stanza after stanza, and how this brings out the steady willing of the speaker. Where do the dashes stop at the ends of the stanzas, and how does the alternation of suspension and pause fit the relief and the strain ?

The five-stressed line offers the common ground for classing together "Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli," "Bifurcation," "Numpholeptos," and "Inapprehensiveness." Each of these smaller groups may be passed in review in the same way as the larger group of poems with a four-stressed line, directing observation to the following points: (1) the preponderance of lines opening with an accented or an unaccented syllable; (2) the preponderant number of syllables to each foot; (3) the dramatic or musical effect of elisions of weak syllables, or of the shift from strong to weak; (4) the rhyme and stanza plan; (5) the nature of the metaphors and allusions and their fitness; (6) whether the poem in part or as a whole is symbolic.

"Numpholeptos" illustrates what is meant by this sixth point. A symbolical suggestion pervades the poem that the nymph is an ideal woman who is the idol of man instead of a human reality. The imagery is the poetic means by which this is implied. This imagery of a central light with colored light rays is an inverse application of Dante's supernal light that guides him heavenward, in the centre of which the poet of chivalric love placed Beatrice, the "lady round whom splendors meet in homage." (See "Vita

Nuova," xliii. ; "Purgatorio," xxix., 77 foll. ; "Paradiso," xxx.). Browning de-theologizes this metaphor. He makes it human by insinuating the effect it might have on man to be led here in his life on earth by such a guardian queen outward from the centre of such light, instead of inward toward it in the pursuit of angelic perfection in heaven. Dr. Berdoe, however, in "Browning's Science in 'Numpholeptos'" (*Poetlore*," Vol. II., pp. 617-624, Dec. 1890), after referring to Dante's imagery, cites Browning's "use of the figure drawn from the constitution of white light" in "The Ring and the Book," i. 1354, "Sordello," v. 605, and "Fifine," 897, to show that Browning was in love with this light metaphor, and in "Numpholeptos" built up a complete poem on this scientific foundation.

Queries for Discussion.—Are Browning's free rhythm and often unadorned diction to be considered as appropriate dramatically or deficient poetically?

Are his lines and metres that are frequently stressed at the beginning to be censured when not in accord with his normal line and metre, or are they to be taken as meant to serve the purpose either of varying and enriching the harmony of the verse or of indicating a change of feeling?

Do the double rhymes in these poems betoken either a certain fluency or playfulness of mood; and does the poet indulge in them when they are dramatically inappropriate to the speaker or do not suit the effect?

Is the scientific or the literary symbolism of the light image in "Numpholeptos" most in keeping with the meaning of the poem?

Which is more frequent in these poems, metaphor, simile, allegory, or symbolism?

A GROUP OF LOVE LYRICS

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*I. Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.
— The Story and Mood.*

Hints:—For the story see notes to *Camberwell Browning* as given above. Observe how many of the poems may be said to have stories, or at least to imply a situation, and how many of them are simply the expression of the lover's moods. In the first two lyrics from "Pippa Passes" the lovers long for the love of the lady of their affection. The page, however, feels how hopeless it is that his lady should ever have any need of him, while in the other one there is the feeling of certainty that the seed of love has been sown and must reach its fruition some time, and that not even death can prevent it. In "Song" the love is so intense that the lover can find no adequate words of praise, himself, but would have others gaze upon his lady and express their admiration in praise, while he keeps silent. In "My Star," the feeling is somewhat of a contrast to that in "Song." Here is a lover who instead of desiring all others to praise his beloved, is happy because he alone can appreciate her, because to him only has she revealed her beauty of soul. This makes her peculiarly his and others are welcome to praise those more brilliant who make a universal impression. Which do you consider represents the deeper of these two phases of feeling?

In "Misconceptions" there is reflected the mood of a lover who has been regarded merely as a stepping stone to a true and abiding love, and has thus been left by his mistress to pine for a good which was not his. He does not rail at the perfidy of the inconstant fair, but seems magnanimously to consider that he had mistaken her graciousness toward him for love and had grown ecstatic upon insufficient grounds. The lover in "One Way of Love" is one who, in spite of the fact that he has spent his whole life in perfecting his

love for the lady's sake and at the end receives no return for it, is yet able to bless all who win the heaven of a perfect love. "Love in a Life" and "Life in a Love": In the first, the lover seems to consider that unless he wins the lady of his heart, love must ever escape him, while in the second the lover feels that once having found the ideal, he has realized the full force of love; and through the whole of his life his love must follow it whether the lady reciprocates or not. Which of these lovers has the deeper nature, the one whose love does not blossom into full life without reciprocation, or the one whose love is sufficient for his life without the reciprocal love of the loved one? Do you think of any other interpretation of the two moods expressed in these poems? Might there be a more symbolical way of looking at them, as indicated in the notes to the poems in the *Camberwell Browning*, in which the poems would stand as symbols of an abstract ideal love?

In "Natural Magic" the lover expresses, by means of symbolism drawn from magic, the sudden transformation in his life upon the advent of the beloved one. In "Magical Nature" the lover's mood is such that he defies time to lessen his admiration of his lady, declaring that her beauty has for him the permanence of a jewel rather than that of a flower which time might fray. In the prologue to "Two Poets of Croisic" the mood is the same as that in "Magical Nature" — namely, the power of love to transform life from a dull and meaningless existence into one henceforth full of joy and gladness. "Wanting is — What?" shows the same thing, only in this there is the desire and need for a love that has never come, and while in "Apparitions" all was dark until love

came, in the last the world is recognized as being beautiful but lacking the touch which will give meaning to its beauty. Which do you think the more likely interpretation, this or the one referred to in the Notes? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XI., p. 227.)

In "Never the Time and the Place" we have the mood of a lover who is chafing under restraints imposed by conditions, but who yet looks forward to reunion with the beloved one, even if it be not until after death.

Observe that there is but one of these lyrics wherein expression is given to a mood indicating that there are things of more importance in life than love, namely the second of the pair "Meeting at Night" and "Parting at Morning." Whether it be interpreted as spoken by the man or the woman, it shows that to this lover love is only an incident of his life. (For discussion as to the meaning of these lyrics see *Poet-lore*, Vol. VII., 1895, April, May, and June-July.) C. R. Corson writes: "The Arcanum of the Garden of Eden has been revealed to them, the need of woman to man, the need of man to woman. It is this revelation that makes him find a path of gold in all his endeavors to provide for her; it has centupled his physical energies, nothing now too hard for him to achieve; all that her heart craves she shall have through him." Another writer says: "Don't you read it like this? 'Round the cape of a sudden came the sea' (the man is speaking) 'and the sun looked over the mountain's rim — and straight was a path of gold for him' (the sun) 'And the need of a world of men for me' (the man who must go back to the world of action he left last night). How plain!" Then there is the third possibility that the woman is speaking, and that she realizes that there is a path of glory in the

world of men for him in which she cannot share and for which she longs in order that she might companion him on his life's way. Which of these interpretations do you think fits best, and which represents the most exalted point of view?

Queries for Discussion.—In comparison with love-lyrics by other poets should you say that these were noticeable for their lack of descriptions of personal beauty? and do you feel that in consequence the intensity of the expression is lessened? Or is there rather a greater depth and sincerity of love implied in such lyrics, because of their emphasis upon a perfect soul-union as the basis of love where the love is reciprocal, and a sense of the immeasurable worth of love to the one who loves whether it calls out any return or not?

Which of these lyrics reaches upon the whole the most exalted expression of love, or are most of them equally exalted in spirit, the differences of mood being due to different conditions?

The lyrics which are interspersed in "Ferishtah's Fancies" differ from those already considered, because they may be grouped together in a series, each one in the series giving expression to a mood growing out of the lives of two souls already united in a deep and true love. (For hints on these lyrics, see Notes, *Clamberwell Browning*, Vol. XII., pp. 305, 307, 308, 309, 311, 313, 315, 316, 319.) "Round us the wild creatures" says a word against the tendency such a soul-wedded pair might have to become completely absorbed in each other, and forget they had any duties to humanity. "Wish no word unspoken" expresses the feeling that even injustice from the loved one is precious. In "You groped your way across my room," the feeling expressed is, that under the enlightening influence of a

ue and constant love, all discords that enter into life will be but a ruffling of the surface of life's deep current, soon to disappear. In "Man I am and man would be," the lover declares that he asks nothing more in this life than his own human perception of the human beauty and goodness in the one he loves. In "So the head aches" he declares that the bodily weakness of the loved one is compensated for in her strength of mind and soul — greater than his, though he is physically so strong. In "When I vexed you," he welcomes chidings for small faults, because he knows in his own inmost consciousness that he has greater failings, she does not suspect, which deserve far sterner chidings than she ever gives. In "Once I saw a chemist," he declares that through the love he has known upon earth, he is able to conceive of heaven, which, however, cannot transcend the bliss of earth except in the fact that in heaven the bliss will last. A reminiscent mood is also reflected in "Verse making" showing that love had been with him so perfectly spontaneous and certain that without and misgivings or calculations as to the results, he immediately "told his love." In "Not with my soul, love," he expresses the desire that their union shall be complete, emotionally as well as spiritually. In "Ask not one least word of praise" his mood is that of one to whom speech in praise of the loved one is not sufficiently subtle for the expression of his inmost soul — a touch reveals his soul better.

This series of glimpses into a life hallowed by a perfect love is rounded out by the Epilogue to "Ferishtah's Fancies," which reveals the fact that the loved one is dead, and now haunting fears and doubts beset the man, that all the glory and beauty he has seen

in the world, owes its existence entirely to the love which has surrounded him in a halo of light. Is it possible to read this series of lyrics connectedly without feeling that they grew out of the poet's own experience in life?

Queries for Discussion.—How does this set of lyrics compare with the others in the centering of the thought upon the spiritual rather than upon the material aspects of life and love?

Though these lyrics are not at all didactic, could you draw a lofty ideal of living from them?

In the remaining lyrics, point out any similarities of mood with those already considered.

Taken as a whole, do you find a remarkable unity of sentiment in all these lyrics, the differences being merely different phases of the same underlying sentiment?

Do these lyrics, on account of the unity of sentiment, give the impression of being more purely subjective than Browning's work usually is?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—Symbolism and Workmanship of the Lyrics.

Hints:—Of the two lyrics from “Pippa Passes,” “Give her but a least excuse to love me” is the more dramatic in form. In the two short stanzas a very definite picture is presented of the Queen, the page, and the maiden. Observe that this is done without any description whatever of any of them. How is it done, then? How much of the situation do you learn from the page's song alone? From the one word given to the Queen, we are able to conjure up a picture of her, attentive to, and evidently touched by the page's song, and this impression is made all the more strong by contrast with the maiden, whose few words show her careless and indifferent, not supposing the Queen

to be interested in the page's song. Notice that the latter part of each stanza is enclosed in parentheses, the form being indirect speech instead of direct — that is, the name of the person speaking is mentioned, and what they say is introduced by "said" in one place, "cried" in another, and so on. If it were not for this should we be able to guess at the personality of the boy who is singing and the person to whom he sings?

Does the second stanza express a phase of the mood any more intense than the first? Do you find any figures of speech in this poem? The line "Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part," without being imagery in the ordinary sense, is a symbolical way of saying that nothing would be too arduous for him to undertake for his lady.

Who is Kate the Queen? (See lines following the lyric, and *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. I., p. 258.)

The rhythm of this poem is very irregular, the number of feet and the kind of feet varying with each line, for example, the first line of the first stanza has five stresses with the unaccented syllable following the accented one; the second, two feet, each of which is a single accented syllable followed by a pause in the place of an unaccented syllable. The third line might be scanned as having either five or six stresses. In the first instance, "can" and "this" would both be treated as short syllables; in the second, "How" would be treated as an accented syllable followed by a pause in place of an unaccented syllable, and "can" would have an accent. Does it give the more musical effect to scan this line as having five stresses? In deciding a point like this would it be best to be guided

by the musical effect? The fourth line again has five stresses, but they are preceded instead of followed by the unaccented syllables. The sixth line might be scanned as having six stresses, in which case "to" would have an accent. Would it not, however, give a more musical effect to make "to" and the following syllable "e" both short and so give the line only five stresses? The next line has three stresses, the first followed by a pause, the other two preceded by the unaccented syllables. The seventh line has four, the accented syllable sometimes followed by two, sometimes by one unaccented syllable, and with an extra unaccented syllable at the beginning of the line. The eighth has four, preceded by two and sometimes by one unaccented syllable. The last has three, followed sometimes by one, sometimes by two unaccented syllables. The second stanza has the same distribution of stresses to the lines, except that the third and sixth lines of the stanza both have to be scanned with six stresses. For this reason it may be that the poet meant the third and sixth lines of the first stanza to be scanned with six stresses, so making the two stanzas counterparts of each other. There is some little variation in the placing of the short syllables. Point these out. Notice that the rhymes are sometimes double and sometimes single. Do you find this poem any the less musical for its irregularity and complexity?

The second of the lyrics from "Pippa Passes" is far simpler in construction, but is a trifle more metaphorical in its expression. Point out which of the lines express the feeling directly and which express it by means of figures. The rhythm and rhymes are also simple, the lines alternating between four and

three stresses, the rhymes also alternating. What slight departures are there from this regularity?

In "Meeting at Night" the first stanza paints in a very few words the evening landscape. The language is perfectly straightforward and simple, breaking only once into the simile of "the waves that leap in fiery ringlets." There is also sufficient action in it to indicate the situation; in the second stanza the scene is sketched still further but loses itself in the climax of the situation. Is there any imagery at all in the second stanza? The background of sea-waves seems to be suggested in this poem by the arrangement of the rhymes, the crest of the wave being in the middle of the stanza, where the couplet occurs. In each stanza there is also a climax of motion in these two lines which dies away in the first in the quenching of the speed of the boat and in the second in the silent beating of two hearts. The lines all have four stresses preceded sometimes by one, sometimes by two unaccented syllables. Is there any regularity in the alternations of one and two short syllables? There are two places where two accented syllables come together, in line 1 and line 10. In the first instance, "gray sea," it seems to add breadth to the picture because of the longer time it takes to say it, while in the second instance emphasis is added.

Point out the variations from the first two stanzas in the third, "Parting at Morning."

In "Song" there is hardly any imagery. The lover emphasizes his feeling through his admiration of the beloved one's golden tresses, an emblem of her nature, which he declares is pure gold. Notice also that this lyric is not addressed to his lady, but to the people who do not love her, and whom he challenges to

witness her worth. The lines have four stresses, the first four in stanza 1 having the unaccented syllable following the accented one, and the last two having the unaccented syllable followed by the accented one. This results in giving the stanza four double rhymes and two single rhymes. What variations do you observe in the second stanza?

In "My Star," the expression all through is symbolical, the beloved one being compared with a star, and this star being further particularized as like an angled spar. For full explanation of this simile see notes to the poem in *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 377. What other things is the Star compared with? In each of these similes a different aspect of the beloved one's nature is pictured. Is there a mixed metaphor in the last line?

The first eight lines of this poem have two stresses and the last five have four stresses. In the first and third the accented syllables are at the beginning and the end of the line. In the second and fourth, the first accented syllable is preceded by two and the second accented syllable is preceded by one unaccented syllable. This produces a pleasing secondary rhythm. The four following lines are accented in the same way. In the other lines the accented syllables are sometimes preceded by one and sometimes by two unaccented syllables. Is there any regularity in this irregularity forming a secondary rhythm similar to that noticed in the shorter lines? Notice the distribution of the rhymes and especially how the shorter lines and the longer lines are linked together by a rhyme in common.

"Misconceptions" resembles "My Star" in the symbolism of the language. The thought is pre-

sented in the first stanza symbolically, and in the second one the same thought is interpreted. The lines in this poem have three stresses, except the last two, which have four. The first line begins with a stress and is followed with two short syllables, the second accented syllable is also followed by two unaccented syllables, but the third by only one, these two making the rhyme. Are there any variations from these arrangements of accents in any of the other four stressed lines? Line 6 has four stresses, the accented syllable being followed by two unaccented syllables except at the end of the line, where it is followed by only one unaccented syllable. Is there any variation from this in the other longer lines? The rhymes in this poem are all double with only two to each stanza.

In "One Way of Love," each stanza gives a little different phase of the thought with different symbolism. Roses the lover had strewn for a month, merely with the chance that they might take his lady's eye. Then for many months he had striven to perfect his music, hoping she might ask him to sing. Then, in the last stanza, the climax of devotion is reached and at the same time the climax of renunciation. Is the language in this poem at all figurative? The rhythm is regular almost all through, the only breaks being in the fifth line of each stanza, where the line begins and ends with an accented syllable. Also the sixth line of the third stanza begins with an accent. The rhymes are also regular, every stanza being made up of three rhymed couplets.

In "Love in a Life" and "Life in a Love" is the expression more symbolistic than realistic? Point out any examples you may find of figures of speech in these two lyrics. Notice that the rhythm of these is

very irregular. The first three lines each have two stresses occurring in different places in each line ; in 1, the first and last syllables have the stress ; in 2, the second and last syllables have the stress ; in 3, the third and sixth have the stress. Notice the variety in the distribution of short syllables in these three lines, resulting in which one having the most syllables ? All the remaining lines have four stresses. In 4, the syllables with a stress are the first, third, sixth, and ninth ; in 5, the first, fourth, seventh, ninth ; in 6, the first, fourth, seventh, ninth ; in 7, the third, sixth, ninth, eleventh ; in 8, the second, fifth, eighth, eleventh. What variations in the distribution of short syllables result from this ? Do you discover any recurring rhythm in the irregularities either within the stanza or in comparing the two stanzas with each other ? The rhyme scheme is also quite complicated, the first three lines rhyming respectively with the last three, the first two being single and the third a double rhyme. Then, the two remaining lines in the middle of the stanza rhyme together with a double rhyme. With so much irregularity of rhythm it might be supposed that the effect would be that of prose rather than poetry, but it will be found when read that the rhythm is smooth and harmonious. "Life in a Love" has still other irregularities. It begins and ends with three lines rhymed together, each of which has but one stress. All the remaining lines have four stresses distributed as follows : 4, second, fourth, sixth, eighth syllables ; 5, second, fifth, eighth, ninth ; 6, first, third, sixth, eighth ; 7, third, fifth, eighth, tenth ; 8, second, fifth, seventh, ninth ; 9, second, fifth, eighth, tenth ; 10, third, fifth, eighth, tenth ; 11, second, fifth, eighth, tenth ; 12, third, fifth, seventh,

ninth ; 13, second, fourth, sixth, ninth ; 14, second, fifth, eighth, tenth ; 15, third, fifth, seventh, ninth ; 16, second, fourth, seventh, ninth ; 17, second, fourth, seventh, ninth ; 18, second, fifth, seventh, ninth ; 19, third, fifth, eighth, tenth. The rhymes are arranged in groups of four, the first and second group have the first and fourth lines rhyming together, and the second and third ; the two remaining groups have the first and third, second and fourth lines rhyming.

“ Natural Magic ” is another example of the symbol being presented in the first stanza, and the feeling it illustrates in the second stanza. Aside from this larger symbolism, is the language of the second stanza entirely realistic, or is the thought in this presented by means of poetic figures ? The verse in this has three stresses to the first, second, and last lines of the stanzas, and four to all the other lines. The general structure of the stanzas is that of an accented syllable preceded by two unaccented syllables, but the variations are numerous ; for example, in line 1, the first syllable has an accent and the last has not ; in lines 2 and 3, the first accented syllable is preceded by only one unaccented syllable ; the rest of the line is regular. Line 4 is regular, but 5, again, has only one unaccented syllable at the beginning. 6 has an extra unaccented syllable to end with. 7 and 8 both begin with only one unaccented syllable and end with an extra unaccented, and 9 is like 1 except that it, too, begins with one unaccented syllable. Point out any variations from this you may find in the second stanza. The rhymes in this poem have quite a complex arrangement, — 1 and 6 rhyme together with a double rhyme, and between these is a quatrain of which the first and fourth rhyme together and the second and third are

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single. Then line 6 forms with the remaining three another quatrain of which the first and fourth, second and third lines rhyme, all double rhymes.

In "Magical Nature," how is the thought presented, in poetic figures or realistically? Observe that rhyme and rhythm are both very simple in this little poem, though even here there is some variation. For example, in the first stanza, lines 1 and 3 have six stresses, and 2 and 4 have seven; while in the second stanza, 1 and 4 have six, and 2 and 3 seven. In the second stanza, also, there is a single rhyme instead of double rhymes between the second and fourth lines. What irregularity in the metre results from this? Is there any other irregularity in the metre?

The little lyric which makes the prologue to "Two Poets of Croisic," presents the thought in three different symbols, each more intense than the preceding one, and only in the very last line in the simple phrase "That was thy face" does it become apparent that it is a love lyric. The rhythm consists of three and two stresses. Line 1 has three, on the first, fourth, and sixth syllables; 2, on the first and fourth; 3, on the first, fourth, and sixth; and 4, on the first and fourth. The other stanzas are exactly the same, but it is to be noticed that the quantity of the unaccented syllable "starved" is so much greater than the other unaccented syllables in the first stanza that it has a very strong secondary accent, — so much of a one, indeed, that if the form were not set by the other stanzas, it would seem more natural to scan this line as if it had four instead of three stresses. In this case the line would consist of two feet made up of an unaccented syllable between two accented syllables. Also in the third line of the third stanza, "God's" has a strong

secondary accent, so strong that the line taken alone could just as well be scanned as having three stresses preceded by three unaccented syllables. Yet the rhythm of the whole poem is better preserved by scanning it like the other three stressed lines. The rhyme scheme here is perfectly simple.

In "Wanting is—What?" the symbolism is so mystically expressed that opinions differ as to the interpretation, as we have already seen. Aside from its larger symbolism, is the language of the poem figurative or metaphorical? The rhythm is interesting from the regularity of the irregularity. The first line of two stresses, with two unaccented syllables between, sets the pattern for the rest of the stanza, every line of which, through line 11, begins with the same arrangement of syllables. From line 5, through line 10, two more stresses are added, with sometimes one, sometimes two unaccented syllables preceding. Point out these variations, also the lines where unaccented syllables are added at the end making double rhymes. The last three lines vary from the other short lines in what way? Observe the arrangement of rhymes.

What peculiarities of rhyme and rhythm do you observe in "Never the Time and the Place" farther than that the lines vary in the number of stresses, some having four, some three, some two?

Query for Discussion. — Is the beauty of these lyrics due almost entirely to the variety and harmony of their rhythmical music, or is it helped on by alliteration and choice of words?

On the whole, the "Ferishtah's Fancies" lyrics are realistic in language, though there are exceptions. Point out all the poetic symbols and images you may observe. The rhythm of these will be found to be

more regular than that of the lyrics so far considered. "Round us the wild creatures" has six stresses, except lines 4 and 12, which have seven. The unaccented syllables follow the accented ones except at the end of the lines. The only other variation to be noted is the changing of places, in line 1, of the second accented and unaccented syllables. "Wish no word unspoken" has lines of six and seven stresses, 2, 5, and 6 having seven, the relation of the accented to the unaccented syllables being the same as in the preceding lyric. "You groped your way across my room" has seven stresses, the unaccented syllable preceding the accented syllable. Do you observe any irregularities at all in this? "Man I am and man would be" has eight stresses, with the unaccented syllable following the accented syllable. "So the head aches" has four stresses to the line, with considerable variation in the placing of the unaccented syllables. For example, in line 1 the first, fourth, seventh, ninth have the accent; in 2 the first, fourth, sixth, ninth; in 3 the third, fifth, eighth, tenth; in 4 the first, fourth, sixth, eighth. Show what other differences there are in the other stanzas. "When I vexed you" has three stresses, preceded sometimes by one, sometimes by two unaccented syllables. Observe also that there is sometimes an extra unaccented syllable at the end of the line. "Once I saw a chemist" has six stresses to all the lines but the last of each stanza, which has seven. The unaccented syllables follow the accented ones, with a few exceptions to be noted. "Verse-making was least of my virtues" has five stresses, with sometimes two, sometimes one unaccented syllable preceding. Line 2 is perhaps the hardest line in the poem

to scan, but it will be found to run quite smoothly if the accents are placed upon the third, sixth, ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth syllables. Notice that in this line there are two unaccented syllables to every accented one. Are there any other lines similar to this one? There is a slight variation in the printing of this poem in the nine-volume and latest two-volume English edition. The *Camberwell Browning* follows the latter, and prints the phrases "And made verse" and "I made love" as part of the fourth line in each stanza. Printed so, it simply adds another foot to the line, which then has an internal rhyme. But in the nine-volume English edition, these phrases are printed in a line by themselves, and in that case each syllable would have a stress. Which seems to you the preferable way of printing and scanning it?

"Not with my soul, love" has five stresses, usually preceded by a short syllable, though many of the lines begin with a stress which is followed by a short syllable, thus bringing two short syllables together; see lines 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10. The last line has but two stresses, on the first and last syllables. "Ask not one least word of praise" has four stresses, with unaccented syllable following, the line ending, however, with an accent. Do you note any irregularities at all in this poem?

The "Epilogue" varies in the number of stresses, for example, in the first stanza line 1 has five, followed by an unaccented syllable; 2 has six, 3 has six, 4 has seven. Of the other stanzas, the second has: line 1, six; 2, six; 3, six; 4, seven. Third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh stanzas: 1, six; 2, seven; 3, six; 4, seven.

Notice the various effects in the rhyming of these

lyrics and compare with the preceding group in regard to their complexity.

Of the remaining lyrics, "Now" has four stresses to the line. "Poetics" is somewhat irregular. In the first stanza, the stresses, in line 1, fall on the first, fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth syllables; in 2, on the first, fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, fourteenth; in 3, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh; in 4, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. In the second stanza, the stresses fall, in line 1, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, syllables; in 2, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh syllables; in 3, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh; in 4, on the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh. "Summum Bonum" has lines of five stresses preceded by two unaccented syllables, and lines of three stresses with sometimes one, sometimes two unaccented syllables between. "A Pearl, a Girl" has four stresses, sometimes preceded by one, sometimes by two unaccented syllables. Point out the variations.

The sonnet form is used only occasionally by Browning, and from the irregularity of the stresses in "Eyes, calm beside thee," it is evident that his muse was restive under its bonds. It is true that there are fourteen lines and each line has five stresses, but the short syllables are varied in the poet's usual free manner, and the rhymes in the octette do not follow the prescribed order at all. Point out how it differs from the usual sonnet form.

Queries for Discussion. — Where the symbolism in these poems is drawn from nature is it vague and general rather than special?

What is its character when drawn from science?

How many different kinds of symbolism do you observe, and which kind predominates?

From this study of the workmanship of these lyrics should you conclude that Browning could not write a lyric, as some critics have said, or that his lyrics really have a more organic music than most other poets have been able to compass?

Does this result from the fact that the liberties he takes in the distribution of accented and unaccented syllables make it possible for him to combine frequently the sense accent with the rhythmical accent at the same time that he escapes the wrenched accents so likely to occur in strict rhythm? If he has any wrenched accents point out whether they are upon weak syllables or whether strong syllables are left without an accent, and discuss which produce the more unpleasant effect.

Could it be said that, since a sense accent never falls on a weak syllable, a rhythmical accent on a weak syllable is more unpleasant than no accent on a strong syllable, when it has, as frequently, no sense accent?

PORTRAITS OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

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Compare with these, Charles and Polyxena in "King Victor and King Charles," i. 237, 327; "Andrea del Sarto," v. 36, 284; Guido and Pompilia, Pietro and Violante, in "The Ring and the Book," vi., vii.; the new Alkestis and Admetos, in Conclusion to "Balaustion's Adventure," viii. 80, 289; "Doctor —," ix. 213, 321; "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," ix. 246, 327; the duke and the druggist's daughter in "Parleying with Daniel Bartoli," xii. 89, 326.

I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
 — The Situation and the Characters.

Hints: — The story each of these poems has to tell is, how the various characters are placed with reference to the different situations they face. Their ways of meeting these situations reveal their nature. For general summaries of the subject-matter, see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, as cited above.

The husband in "By the Fireside" imagines a situation he will have to meet when he is an old

man left alone by the younger generation. The situation he anticipates is sketched realistically in stanzas i. and ii., so that we see him, by the fire, steadily turning the pages of an old Greek book ; hear the shutters flap in the November wind-scurries, and the youngsters cautiously planning to steal out while he is so absorbed. But stanza i. prepares us to understand that this is only the frame of an external sort of portrait. It is the soul's ripe autumnal hue, and the music of her voices with which he is planning to solace himself in life's November. It is an inward portrait of himself that he will draw, in the act of mentally realizing what his love for his wife and hers for him have meant.

The Greek he pictures himself as deep in (stanza iii.) is, as he explains in stanzas iv. and v., but an outside frame for an inside archway, a network of impressions and recollections opening a wide vista through his life from age to youth and Italy. He passes on through this to live his love over again, beginning more externally in descriptive first impressions of out-door scenes enjoyed together in Italy (stanzas vii. to xx.); then more and more internally penetrating in the remainder of the poem to the significance to them of their joint emotions, to be realized in old age, as these first impressions of the earlier part of their day out-doors together were ripened for them, at second view, on their return, in the evening. Notice that stanzas xxi.—xxx. introduce this second division of more introspective reminiscence with an apostrophe to his wife and the blest old age to which such youth must lead. Then stanza xxxi. takes up the theme, dropped in stanza xx., of the bird there spoken of, with a noonday picture of it stilled by the

menace of two hawks. Stanza xxxii. rapidly takes his memory to afternoon, and the growing silence and significance of evening. Stanzas xxxiii.-xlvi. review the home-return and its feelings; xlvii. presents the climax of emotion; xlviii. links this with the out-door influence; and, finally, xlix.-liii. sum up this love experience as the potency for the distinctive fruitage of his soul henceforth.

Discuss further the descriptions, allusions, and analogies employed. Do you think he was thinking, literally, of a learned book, or of that as a symbol of the volume of experiences age collects? Is the book really, then, to be all prose, no verse; or is he playfully seeing himself "as others see him," especially as children look upon an old man, as if for him the romance of life is over, while he means to show it is enhanced? For information as to localities, the relation of these with Mr. and Mrs. Browning, allusions, etc., see *Camberwell Browning*. What idea does the poem give you of the man personally, as to his sensibility, observation of nature, culture, and character? What do you gather as to the woman?

"Any Wife to Any Husband" is a counterpart portrait of a wife who, like the husband of "By the Fireside," cleaves to the love she has experienced with only the more intensity when life is ripe. The situation she is facing — her approaching death — comes out in the first stanza (line 6). She apprehends, although her husband would be equally absorbed in his love for her could she live, that now he will not be. The inner situation implied in this, considered with reference to her own and her husband's character, occupies her outpouring throughout the poem. Wherein her husband will fail in devotion comes out

how, in lines 7-24? Does she claim that his steadfastness is due merely to her personal charm? Still, her desire that his fidelity perfectly correspond with her own ideal of love for them both bursts out again in lines 25-33. In lines 34-48 what praise does she again give him, and what does this tell you of his character? Finally (lines 49-78), she expresses just what the further point of view is which she exclaims against with passion again (79-102), upholding her own point of view, in stanzas xviii. and xix., maintaining that he could do as much or more, in the two following stanzas; until with the last half-line of the poem she rises to a climax of desire for this and doubt of it. How far does the poem reveal the character of this wife and husband? Is it a less objective portrait of the two than that given in "By the Fireside"? Why?

What reason can you give to justify the guess that the first poem is a sort of dramatization of Browning as a husband, and his point of view; and the second a sort of dramatization of Mrs. Browning, not necessarily as his own wife, but as a type of such a woman's point of view?

"My Last Duchess," "The Flight of the Duchess," and "The Statue and the Bust" belong together in portraying husbands and wives whose environment is not modern, as that of the two foregoing poems is. They are all almost mediæval. Even the portraits of Guido and Pompilia in "The Ring and the Book" are appropriate to a period when the legal or generally accepted views of a husband's authority over a wife had become somewhat more questionable.

"The Flight of the Duchess," though it probably

belongs in its setting to a later time and a northern country, Germany, ranks with the first two Italian poems because of the mediævalism affected by the husband, against which the Duchess revolted. The situation, accordingly, in all these poems is alike, being largely created by exactions of the husband enforced in a way foreign to the conditions allowable between modern husbands and wives. The situations sketched lie, therefore, in a more physical plane than in the first two poems. In "My Last Duchess," for example, instead of a situation created as in "By the Fireside" out of the husband's claim that the love experience of youth is spiritually fulfilled in old age, or out of the wife's claim, in the following poem, that only absolute fidelity after the death of the wife suits the ideal beauty of a supreme love, is a situation so far removed from these that it consists in a husband's arranging with an envoy for a successor to the wife he had ordered should die. All that is involved in this situation comes out in the course of this interview. While exhibiting his last wife's portrait to this envoy, this husband shows her nature and his own, how? Notice that you gather at once, since he speaks of the painting as that of his last Duchess "looking as if she were alive," that she is now dead; also, that he is a collector and appreciator of art; that the two men are standing, since he invites the visitor to sit, etc.; that he is sensitive now, and has been, to the admiration his wife's beauty excites, since he warns his visitor, "by design," that the artist was a monk, and then launches out in details of resentment against the Duchess for being of so gladsome a temperament that she showed interest in more than himself; that he was so proud and taciturn in his demands that to order her death

was the only way to maintain them. Observe the threatening effect, after this explanation, of the repetition of his first words, "There she stands as if alive." How do you learn that the visitor has been sitting during all the talk? What other picturesque details come out in the remaining lines to complete the husband's character and illustrate the situation?

The situation and the characters of the husband and wife in "The Flight of the Duchess" agree in important respects with those in the preceding poem. Wherein do they differ, and in what are they alike? The situation is made clear by one speaker, also; but he is not a prominent personage in the story, as in the other poem; and observe how many more personages are involved in the story, and how many more details and side-lights can and do come out, because an observer, this huntsman, closely allied to the household, is telling the tale to a trusted friend.

Show how the situation is presented, so that the country, the father and the mother of the present Duke, the circumstances that led to the son's affectation of mediævalism, the conventionalisms he introduced, the wife he chose, the way she came to the castle, her nature and looks, her husband's notions of wifely propriety, their effect on the bride, and finally the surprising events that followed are related with familiarity and vividness: the hunt; the coming of the Gipsies, the peculiar character and habits of the Northland Gipsies, and especially of the Gipsy crone; her interview, first with the Duke, then with the Duchess; her incantation and its effect, and how much of this and under what circumstances he, the story-teller, overheard or otherwise knew; what happened when he came to himself, and how he

helped the two off on horseback; and, last of all, how the thirty years since he last set eyes on the Duchess have passed at the castle, and under what circumstances he is disburdening himself of the whole story, confessing his cherished loyalty to the runaway Duchess and his scorn of his master the Duke.

How does the poem lead you to explain the characters of this husband and wife? To account for the effect of the Gipsy's song upon Jacynth, the huntsman, the Gipsy herself, and the Duchess? To delight in the flight that followed?

Are the huntsman's final words, at the last line of the poem, a fair summing up of the characters and the situation? What idea does his story-telling give of his own character? Of his relations with Jacynth?

The relations of the husband and wife are not the main concern in "The Statue and the Bust;" but the situation grows out of these, and through it we get a glimpse of the husband's character as well as of the wife's, what sort of claims he makes upon her, and how he enforces them, and how they do not, in this case, lead to the wife's flight. Show, in detail, how the whole story is brought out in narration of what the Florentines tell about the statue, by giving dramatically what the lady said, what the bridesmaids saw and whispered, what the Duke said and looked, felt and perhaps expressed; the effect of their intervention on the bridegroom's talk and inaction; and show, finally, how the poet's comment on their letting "I dare not wait upon I would" applies to the situation and the characters, remembering that the inquiry at this time is not to discuss the morality of his com-

ment, but merely to get what is expressed in its relation to the story and the characters.

Modern characters and a situation of a merely spiritual kind between the husband and the wife relate "James Lee's Wife" with the first two poems of this series rather than with those just reviewed. The lyrical treatment brings out the situation, — which is merely the recognition by the wife of the husband's estrangement, — and presents the characters of the two, through the emotional expression of the wife's love, in much the same manner as in "Any Wife to Any Husband." What are the different moods of the wife; and what do they tell you of the place where they are; of herself, her love, her mind and tastes and development; and of her husband's nature? In "IV. — Along the Beach" and "IX. — On Deck" more comes out than in the other divisions of the poem as to her husband's point of view and personality and her own personal appearance. What do you gather as to these? How do you account for the extreme harshness of her reference to her own hair and skin in stanza viii. of "On Deck"? Is this to be taken literally? Notice how the sub-titles of the different divisions, "At the Window," "By the Fireside," etc., give a stage setting that suggests the terms of her expression. Might these similes as to her hair and skin be suggested by the cargo of the boat, — logs and bales of hair, that may be imagined as piled near by her on the deck of a French coaster, — or is it better to attribute these similes to overstatement belonging to her characteristic intensity?

"A Forgiveness" and "Beatrice Signorini" are counterpart pictures, in so far as both show how a

certain type of husband and a certain type of wife resented and treated an indulgence of their spouses in a superficial affair. The jealousy and pride of the husband of "A Forgiveness" leads to actual violence against both the wife and her lover; while that of the wife, "Beatrice Signorini," leads her to a deed of violence, less tragic but more effective, against the rival's portrait. But point out the many differences, both in the manipulation of the story (which, in the one case, is through the medium of the husband's monologue giving his point of view, and in the other, through the poet's narrative giving all points of view) and in the elements entering into the jealousy and the differences in the characters of the three persons in each poem.

Contrast the rivals, particularly the insignificance of the man in "A Forgiveness," the superiority of Artemisia; and the effect of this difference.

Is jealousy the motive of the husband's act in "A Forgiveness"? Why then did he wait to punish his wife, and why did he punish her at all when he did, since he had then learned that she really loved himself? But if jealousy had no part in his act, why did he stab the rival? Consider whether "A Forgiveness" is really a poem of forgiveness or revenge, or both, or whether the title is satiric. Can that be said to be forgiveness which finds satisfaction only in the death of the person forgiven? Is there anything to show that the husband regretted his action? Ask where the husband is when he tells his story; to whom he relates it; what he was, — did he hold his position of honor or trust through worth or birth? and in what line do you infer it was? Did this husband love his wife at first, and was she at all justified in

resenting his living so much away from her? What light does this throw on her character? Why did she take the course of action he describes? Was it through her lack of love for him, or was he at fault, or were circumstances to blame? Do you admire the pride shown thereafter by both? On which did this trial by silence bear harder? Do you think the wife's second confession (of the truth this time) deserved the reception it got? What do you think of the motives of this husband and wife? Was either of them justified in the action taken? Did the husband recognize the lover from the first? Note the lines, "— or his who wraps — Still plain I seem to see! — About his head The *idle* cloak;" also, any other references to the same effect. Do you suppose the lover became a monk to elude the husband's vengeance, or do you think he may have gone into the monastery because his life was completely broken, through the incident with the wife? What was the monk's fate at last, and did he deserve it?

The situation which disturbs the relations of Elvire and her husband, when they visit Pornic fair and see Fifine, is a conflict, in practice rather than in theory, between their points of view as to how completely a supreme love should assert its spiritual ascendancy over lesser attractions. With reference to the wife, how does her situation and point of view differ from or agree with that of the other wives in the preceding poems? The husband in character and point of view is much the same as the husband of "Any Wife to Any Husband." Although Elvire is walking by his side, instead of about to die, like the wife in the earlier poem, it is to be noticed that she grows shadowy from time to time, and especially at

the end of the poem, as seen through her husband's eyes; that this is in accordance with the argument he is carrying on, wherein he makes the wife considered as a phantom judge herself considered as the real wife. In this way she partakes of the nature of that purely spiritual side of love with which he identifies her, and of the experimental side, also, through which she, too, must be judged.

Follow his talk, not in particulars, but in its general trend, throughout the poem, in order to see what his argument setting forth the situation as he sees it amounts to; then notice what his action is, and judge, taking him at his word, how it agrees or can be reconciled with the argument. What do both argument and action reveal, — the first as to his culture and habits, æsthetic sensibility and taste, ideals and aspiration; the second, as to his will and character?

For example, the general trend of his argument admits that there is a love which is essential and supreme for each two who feel it, but that this is spiritual and absolute and can only be known relatively. It is recognized the more clearly through the development of the individual consciousness, and that is developed by means of sense in relations with others in actual life.

His opening speeches (stanzas vi.—xiii.) oppose conventional life to Bohemianism, and strive to find the secret of Fifi's real value as an individual, in contrast with Elvire and the other types of women he instances (lines 149-909).

What has this to do with the argument? Concede that it illustrates the worth of each individual soul, and that this worth may be perceived by every one despite imperfection through sympathetic relationship; still,

does he need to have taken care to prepare the way for his final action (see stanza cxxxii.) to prove to himself in this case what he accepts in general?

Elvire objects (stanza lx., see especially lines 917-922), showing her distrust of sense as really ministrant to soul. Notice all the speeches attributed to her, how they reveal her character slightly and incidentally, but throw suspicion on his, preparing the reader for this final action of his as being just what she guesses will follow his good argument for enabling the intuitions of the soul to transcend sense.

Despairing of explanation, in words, of the indefinite emotional appeal sense makes to soul as in music (lxi.), he turns to nature (lxii. and foll.), and then (lines 1009-1143) likens the use of the false or fleeting and relative in human attachments to attain the true and ultimate in human development to motion through the unstable, as in swimming, so that progress is made and the need for light and air met also.

Elvire objects (lxix.) that if development through the recognition of individual value were what he really desired, he would look for it in all men and not in women only. He acknowledges (lines 1154-1155) that this parry shifts his argument from the general to the particular test, i. e. not whether the reasoning is good, but whether he is reasoning disinterestedly and will apply it disinterestedly. To meet this he claims (1162-1371) that the materialism and selfishness of men are not qualified to educe growth as the idealism and unselfishness of women are.

Again Elvire is made to object that if this be so, there is no need of a Fifine to do him such service less well than the Elvire he acknowledges best. To which he rejoins that a poorer craft induces the more

skill in the manager. The use of any means is to attain a genuine aim. It is the attraction of art that it uses means towards an end, transcends its processes, does not pretend to *be* absolutely, but in simulating the truth teaches what reality is (1372-1529). So, in general, through the perception of life without pretence that it is absolutely true or permanent, a sense of truth, of permanence in flux itself, is evolved. This is exemplified widely, in a dream he tells (1539-2226), with reference to human nature and social relations. (See digest of the poem in *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. IX., p. 288, also passages in Introduction, pp. xiii, xvi-xxi.)

Does the conclusion that the ripe nature knows the ascendancy of soul and the good of constancy in love accuse the husband of lack of development? But is Elvire as developed as he? Are her ideas of married constancy the fruit of experience, or intuition, or convention?

"Bad Dreams" gives expression alternately to a wife's and a husband's mood in regard to each other, at a time when some discord of mistrust, on his part, and consciousness of it, on her part, has broken in on the harmony of their love. The under consciousness of this seems to have come out in these dreams they have which they tell each other. The first is apparently the wife's. What does it reveal of her secret uneasiness as to her husband's brooding? Does it seem to be an unconscious revelation of her soul? And should you judge from it that her love was true, deep? The second is chiefly the dream of the husband which he tells her. From the opening stanzas addressed to her, before telling the dream itself, what idea do you get of his blaming her and being

primed to accuse her of the nameless evil he has but dreamed about her, yet puts faith in superstitiously, as if it were real? How do you get this idea? Is the dream itself of the toil of men and women at a dance without gayety a sign of a morbid mind as to the relations of men and women? What is the dream? Is it specific enough to suggest what his quarrel with her may be? As to the charge itself, how does it reveal him as still shaken and under the spell of the dream? Notice his break off (line 62), and the protestation, first, that his respect shall stay firm, and then, that now she is there in the flesh she must explain, and not object that it was merely a dream, etc. She follows this with another dream (lines 86-100). Do you think its absurdity and inconsequence really dreamlike? Do her dream and her manner about his convince you of her innocency of heart and mood? Can you suppose it merely a clever turning off of the inquisitory air he has shown? "Bad Dreams," III., is supposably the man's dream and is suggestive, but so very vaguely so, of personal relations or situations, that one may fancy what he pleases about it. How would you explain its congruity with the other dreams, and with the situation between these two? Does the implied meaning, suggested in *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, p. 366, suit, or can you think of something closer to the figure of forest and city becoming a curse to each other? The last dream is obviously the wife's. Has it the same whimsical quality her second dream had? Or has it rather the pathetic, almost heart-worn character her first one had? What should you infer from that of the genuineness or slight nature of her love? What does it tell you of his? And do you

think her impression of him as revealed in this last dream is worth more than his of her?

Queries for Discussion.—Do the varieties of character presented in these portraits of husbands and wives differ distinctly from one another; or may they be classed, with slight differences, under a few general types? How many such are there, and how many may be added, or classed with these, on comparison with the husbands and wives in "King Victor and King Charles," "Andrea del Sarto," "The Ring and the Book," the "Parleying with Daniel Bartoli," etc. (see list before given)?

Do the situations differ much; and how often do they arise from the desire of one or the other for exclusive devotion, from a rival's attractions, or outside social relations?

Is the husband's point of view in the first poem, or the wife's in the second, the finer, in that he is taken up with his own fidelity and has nothing to say as to hers, while she is concerned that his shall equal hers? Is it a token of elevated love to desire that the loved one's return should be perfectly reciprocal, or is this inconsistent with a high degree of individual development of character?

Is there room for doubt that the Duke of Ferrara had his last Duchess put to death? "He succeeded and he seems to be proud of it," says Professor Corson ("Introduction to Browning," p. 87), "in shutting off all her life currents . . . and we must suppose that she then sank slowly and uncomplainingly away. . . . 'I gave commands' certainly must not be understood to mean commands for her death." Again (preface to third edition), he says he referred to Browning "the divided opinion as to the meaning"

of this expression ; that the poet “made no reply, for a moment, and then said, meditatively, ‘Yes, I meant that the commands were that she should be put to death,’ and then, after a pause, added . . . as if the thought had just started in his mind, ‘Or he might have had her shut up in a convent.’” Is this question of consequence æsthetically or historically, or both ? See Symonds’s “Renaissance in Italy,” Vol. III., chapter vii., for historical examples of such marital commands. Which action best suits the character of the Duke and the Duchess ? How does it agree with the Riccardi’s imprisonment of his wife in “The Statue and the Bust” ? (See “The Statue and the Bust,” a Parable, *Poet-love*, Vol. X., p. 398, for a similar instance.)

In “The Flight of the Duchess” can any explanation be made upon natural grounds for the change in the appearance of the Gipsy Queen which the teller of the story noticed ? Was the wife’s attraction towards the Gipsies one of race, freedom from artificial restraint, or of an emotional and happy natural life as opposed to a cold and formal subordination ?

Is James Lee’s wife unlovable ? Is it a defect in James Lee’s character, or is it natural that he should tire of intensity ?

For whom do we feel the most sympathy, — the deceived priest, the deceived husband, or the deceiving wife of “A Forgiveness” ? Whose love is the sincerest ?

Is the argument of Elvire’s husband sophistical, or is he insincere, or is his will weak, and his character cruder than his intellect ?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
— The Relationship and its Possibilities.

Hints : — Observe what the nature of the relationship is between these husbands and wives, and test its value for them by noticing what it is actually capable of for each in developing them and making life worth more to them.

The husband, in "By the Fireside," supplies his own estimate of his relationship with his wife and of its infinitely expansible worth to him in making his life worth while. And the wife, in the second poem, is so far in agreement with such an idea of the perpetual worth of a supreme love that for her it is capable of absorbing her whole heart; but, if we take her word for it, it is not capable of so absorbing her husband's. If for him the relationship were equally absorbing, even in her absence, her idea of all its capabilities for both of them would have been met. Would this prove to be development equally for him? Might he not claim, as Elvire's husband does, that there are other relationships and points of view in life, and that it is a question for each individual nature to ask as to what educes its quality most effectively? Would the idea held by the husband of "By the Fireside" have satisfied the craving of this type of wife, and would it carry out the utmost capability of the relationship?

Is there an intenser strain in the idea of the relationship held by James Lee's wife? What can you derive from the poem as to James Lee's idea of their relationship? Is there any justification of his ennui suggested, or was it akin to that of the hero of "Another Way of Love"?

Is the husband of "By the Fireside," in a still closer sense, a supplementary figure to the wife of "Any Wife to Any Husband" because he is trying to meet such a wife's idea of the possibilities of their relationship?

Can you judge how far he is indebted to her for the initiation of the idea in which he shares? Notice, moreover, that, as Browning paints him, he is anticipating what he will do in an old age not yet actually reached. Compare "St. Martin's Summer" as a picture of what such a husband might feel in presence of an attraction after his wife's death, although he recognized it to be of a lesser sort. Which conquered in that poem? Is he actually "ghost bereft," or does he only fear to be?

Which of the husbands in the remaining poems are more like the husband of "By the Fireside," in their idea of their marriage relationship and its possibilities; and which are more like James Lee? Is there in any of Browning's work any double of the husband of the first poem to be found (except by implication in "One Word More," "The Wall" — Prologue to "Pacchiarotto," "Never the Time and the Place," and other such thinly veiled autobiographical poems?) outside of the lovers,—such as Valence in "Colombe's Birthday," Caponsacchi in "The Ring and the Book," etc.? What inference do you draw from this as to Browning's observation of life?

The desire of "Any Wife," James Lee's wife, and Elvire for evolving from the married relationship its utmost possibilities for mutual devotion might be called the desire for exclusive possession on the spiritual plane; and so corresponding with the desire of the husbands of "My Last Duchess," "The Flight of the Duchess," "The Statue and the Bust," for getting out of the relationship all it was selfishly worth to them, which might be called the desire for exclusive possession on the physical plane.

Is Beatrice Signorini to be classed with this group of wives? Or in what respects does her idea of the relationship and its possibilities differ from theirs? Is Francesco's relationship with her the highest possible for him? What does Browning's way of telling of his attraction for Artemisia intimate as to the possibility for a relationship which would conduce to Romanelli's higher development were he capable of fitly responding?

Does the husband of "Bad Dreams" in his suspiciousness and exactions belong with the husbands who are disposed to consider the married relationship as a field for impressing their will upon others? Compare his ideas of marriage with those of the husband in George Meredith's "Modern Love," as examples of the survival of dominating egotism mixed with the refinement of a modern husband of more than ordinary sensibility.

The husband of "A Forgiveness" is especially interesting because he presents an apparent contradiction. He seems to have high ideas at first of the possibilities of the relationship between himself and his wife, to scorn jealousy of the vulgar sort, and to have the purest grief awakened when he discovers his wife's disloyalty. But later, his coldness and disdain, his refined cruelty of silence and of vengeance, finally, when he learns that her error was due to misguided love for him, show him to be in his different way as bent upon asserting his prerogatives as the Duke of Ferrara.

Is it a token of the desire for spiritual ascendancy which the wife of "By the Fireside" has and the wife of "Any Wife to Any Husband" wants to have, that the wife of "A Forgiveness" is hungry for

greater love and a more spiritual power over her husband, and seeks to arouse his physical passions from the intellectual control to which they are subject? In so doing she, as it were, divides the physical and spiritual elements of her love, feeding thus a jealous reaction, amounting almost to hatred, against the love that seemed to her too superior and self-contained to be love. Show the similar lack of balance on his part in the sequel. Did he not criticise her love also, and turn judge and executioner because it was not what he would have it? Did either develop a higher phase of love in the course of the poem?

What should you say was the idea of their married relationship held by Elvire's husband; and what that of its possibilities? Do the two disagree somewhat, his idea of their relationship being that he holds a similar right to that the Duke of Ferrara claimed,—to get out of that, and all other relations beside, what he wanted; while his ideas of the possibilities of the relationship are almost as exalted as those of the husband of "By the Fireside."

Queries for Discussion.—What should you say was the basic difficulty in the relations between the unhappy or semi-happy pairs portrayed in this series of poems and what the firmer ground of union in "By the Fireside"?

Shakespeare makes Iago say that love is "a permission of the blood." He writes in his "Sonnets" (cxvi.) that it is "an ever-fixed "mark," "the star to every wandering bark," "Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle's compass come." By which criterion will the relationships in these poems best be judged, and which will be accounted as having the highest possibilities?

Is it due to the increasing importance in these poems of the woman as an active and intellectual power in the relationship, instead of a passive and merely physical element, that the type of love represented in "By the Fireside" is the highest? If the wives in some of these poems be considered to desire to exercise a sort of spiritual despotism, can it be said of this that it is a benevolent despotism tending toward the development of the higher values of the relationship, while the physical despotism exercised in fact by certain of the husbands is crushing to any life or happiness? But would it be better still to have no despotism even of a benevolent variety in the relationship?

Does "By the Fireside" show the highest capability of the related power and characters of the husband and the wife because the physical and spiritual elements of love are fused?

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—The Artistic Intention.

Hints: — What do these poems reveal of the poet's design and of the means used to attain it?

The first two poems are framed to express a significant personal mood; the second, as its title shows, being intended also to be somewhat more than personal, to be typical of the wifely attitude. The title, "By the Fireside," also reveals design. With its implications of the close of the year, of cold and darkness, it suggests the right atmosphere for this poem of anticipated old age. Use is intentionally made, too, of autumn's "pleasant hue," its woodland fruits, and crimson-splashed leafage to symbolize happy old age. Notice all such symbols. Point out the adaptation to the theme of the imagery of the book, the

youngsters, the branch-work vista. The figure as to the "branch-work" is doubtless suggested by the foregoing fancy of the youngsters going to the hazel wood. Observe that he speaks in stanza v. of the outside frame of the branch-work as like the hazel-trees, the inside as less material and external, — "a rarer sort" pertaining to the world of mind. Notice the metaphoric reference to Italy in stanza vi. Is it a happy figure to use in a poem written in memory and praise of a wife? The imagery employed in the nature descriptions is of what kinds? The mill or iron forge that "breaks solitude in vain" (line 35) is humanistic, one may say, in its implication, this building with human interest being likened to a little interruption of nature's large stillness; the "thread of water," all that finds its way through the obstruction the torrent has piled in its own course (line 40), and the "silver spear-heads" (44) are figures borrowed from the similar look of material objects. But the simile of the small ferns' teeth (50) is both humanistic in its source and objectively graphic in effect. Notice the humanistic image in stanza xxxii. and so on. Are any of the figures used in the passage in the poem describing the natural beauty of the Italian scene especially adapted to the larger symbolism of the poem, like the first references to the season of the year as corresponding to life's November, etc.? The small bird (151) that sings except at noonday, when a pair of hawks threaten it, seems to signify more than usual. What does it suggest of the danger to love's song in the high noon of life? Compare with the hawk that stalks on the bough where the birds are quarrelling, in "A Woman's Last Word" (lines 5-11). Observe, also, the tree with its one

last leaf hanging, to which he likens his sleeping heart (lines 201-215). Is this symbolic, — a pictorial allusion fleetingly suggestive of a subtle feeling, but not to be tracked out in literal detail; or is it as elaborately allegorical as Mr. Nettleship makes it in the following curious passage: "I, in that early autumn time of my brain, stood there like an old wood-god worshipping a nymph changed to a tree. . . . I knew there was no chance for me to gain any token of love from that tree with its one precious leaf, by any act of my own. . . . I was not in that summer prime when I could take by force of brain what gifts I would. But the tree was good to me. At the slight wind of my unexpressed mad longing, it unfastened its leaf. . . . In that moment you fulfilled my hope."

Is stanza lii. a part of this husband's reminiscences, or is it written from his present standpoint, while his wife is still sitting opposite to him and before the anticipated autumn comes? Does the recurrence in the last stanza to ideas expressed in the opening stanza repeat it needlessly, or serve intentionally to set the poem in the frame of a plan carrying out the thought?

The metre in which the poet makes the man express himself is a four-stressed line, generally iambic, grouped in stanzas of five verses alternately rhyming; the fifth line is shorter, with but three stresses, rhyming with the initial rhyme, and closing the stanza perceptibly to the ear.

The longer five-stressed line of the second poem lends to the ardent tone of "Any Wife" a much more melancholy cadence. In comparison the verse of "By the Fireside," although pensive, almost dreamy, is both cheerier and less suppressed. Notice the

different stanza and rhyme scheme ; how infrequently the stress falls on the first instead of the second syllable of the foot compared with the foregoing poem ; how much simpler the imagery is. Is it less humanistic, but more complete in its similarity to the idea ? Especially observe the obvious fitness of the tomb metaphor (lines 103-114) and the perfect beauty of it in all its adaptation to the mood expressed.

Does this difference in the range of the imagery between the two poems serve the purpose of portraying the personality of the two distinct sorts of poetic mind here finding dramatic expression, — the one tending to be both more fleetingly allusive and humanistic in its fancies, like Robert Browning ; the other more purely lyric, subjective, and spontaneous, like Elizabeth Barrett Browning ?

The three following poems are contrived so as to bring out personality chiefly, also ; but to do this in a much more complex way, and in a way both dramatically and metrically suited to the spokesman in the first two, and to the general air of a Florentine legend in the third of the stories. They each depict more persons than one, and these not subjectively nor by allusion merely, as in the foregoing poems, but objectively in relationship with others and amid various surroundings both of a concrete and a historic sort.

For example, show how the fresco-painted, bronze-adorned palace-hall at Ferrara makes the right background for the Duke's tell-tale talk with the Count's envoy ; and how the flowing, rarely end-stopped, five-stressed verse, couplet-rhyming yet never noticeably obtruding the rhyme, seems to be in general accord with the manner of such a spokesman as the one through whose eyes this bit of life is seen.

The whole country, with its occupants of diverse callings and customs, the castle, household, stable, etc., stand behind the second poem. Several different sets of social relationship — such as those between the Kaiser, the Duke and his huntsmen, the rude Northland, sophisticated Paris, and free gipsy life — add their larger semi-feudal environment to the story. And the medium through which it is all set forth — the rough yet ready, couplet, triplet, and alternate rhymed, often perilously double and obtrusively rhymed verse, racy with hunting terms, and imagery of a homely out-doors kind — is adapted to suit the tongue of the keen-eyed gamekeeper who helps the Duchess to escape, and whose kind heart is susceptible enough to be impressed with the gipsy incantation song, so that he could record it faithfully as he does, in a sustained, singing, smooth and simple rhymed line, strongly contrasting in all other respects, except that the line is also four-stressed, with his own speech. Collect examples of the hunting terms, the allusions to active life, the proverbial expressions and the references, when they are of a literary sort, to familiar folk stories, such as Orson and Esau. Are there any allusions that do not suit the spokesman? Study the effect of the rhymes, and the contrast with the Gipsy's song. (See *Poet-love*, "Rhymes in Browning," Vol. II., Sept. 1890, pp. 480-486.)

Is the terza-rima of "The Statue and the Bust" an appropriate metre for that Florentine legend? Why? What allusions and similes (see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 397) are there in this poem; and can you trace any choice in them? Does even the imagery of the conclusion — which is separable from the legend itself, as the townsmen tell it — suit

the Italian setting? Notice the "soldier-saints" of line 222, and "the very Guelph," 234, and show their pertinence.

These poems so far considered reveal artistic intention in their imagery and metrical structure, as well as in the manipulation of the subject matter. Regarded as wholes, do they reveal artistic intention in broader ways? In all of these three poems the design of the poet to recreate the life and spirit of the Renaissance period in general, and in particular its crudities as to married life, may be studied with reference to the history of that important epoch which forms the threshold of modern civilization. (See *Camberwell Browning*, passages on these poems in Introduction, Vol. IV., pp. xiv and xv, for further general hints. As to Riccardi's imprisonment of his bride, and what the Duke's admiration of her might have meant for him, see "Browning's 'The Statue and the Bust,' a Parable," by Prentiss Cummings, *Poet-love*, Vol. X., No. 3, pp. 397-416.)

In the second and third of these three poems, the intention to make them illustrate moral evolution is also revealed directly. In the first of this group, "My Last Duchess," moral intention is only revealed indirectly. There is no trace of artistic manipulation of the story to make it suggest an inner meaning. In the others what traces are there of a sort of moral symbolism? And how is this presented? Notice that this symbolism consists, in "The Flight of the Duchess," in drawing a contrast between a sapless, egotistical, and imitative manner of life, and one irradiated with the warmth and movement of love and freedom, so that the question is not, "Was the Duchess justified in running away with the Gypsy

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Queen," but, rather, is the Duke's death in life compatible with any spiritual progress at all?

"The Statue and the Bust" has been accused of a didactic purpose instead of artistic moral symbolism. But in this poem, as in "The Flight of the Duchess," is the design which is revealed one that tends towards the illumination of a basic moral principle, and not one that directs one how to act in a given case? (See Mr. Cummings' "The Statue and the Bust," as cited above.)

Which of the remaining poems of this series reveal artistic intention, both historically and morally, as these two poems do?

"James Lee's Wife" shows artistic design in the way in which various details of its allusions suit the lyrical mood, such as the comparisons with the lake and swan, the dell and dove (Part I. lines 15-20), the ship rotting in port (Part II. 19-24), the water striped like a snake, the fig leaf like a hand (III. 3 and 10). Instance others. In this it is like the first two poems of this series. It shows also, like "By the Fireside," a larger and more complex use of metaphors to illustrate the situation and the subject as a whole. For example, the change of season as a symbol of change in love is the keynote of the poem. It is struck in the first two stanzas lightly; it reappears in Part III.; it deepens in significance, to denote the change in all things spiritual in Part VI. (51-80), and in Part VII. it is metamorphosed still further to symbolize the spiritual harvest of joy the earth gets out of change, and in Part VIII. to suggest the inner spiritual beauty, in contrast to external beauty, that may be got out of the use of life as it is, whether ideal and perfect or not. The metrical and scenic adaptation of

the different parts to express the different moods of the wife is manifold. (See reference to this in *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Introduction, p. xxiii.)

"Bad Dreams" may be compared with this poem as having parts differently made, to suit the lyrical design in metre and metaphor. But is it as rich as "James Lee's Wife" in these respects? Ask if each part in both poems has a plan of its own; what it is, what differences may be observed in the number of stresses to the line, the stanza form, and the relation of the title of each part of "James Lee's Wife" to the imagery and the mood. Neither of these poems reveals either the historic or moral sort of artistic intention noticed in the preceding group.

There are few allusions in "A Forgiveness" to place its historic background definitely before us. The names of the maids (line 48), the allusion to Don Quixote (97) and to the order of the Golden Fleece, a Bourbon decoration peculiar to the Courts of Madrid and Vienna (195), warrant the acceptance of it, however, as a dramatic portrait of a husband and wife intended to be as typically Spanish, perhaps of the seventeenth century, as "My Last Duchess" is of Northern Italy in the age of the Despots. Like "My Last Duchess," it depicts the power a husband of rank exercised at pleasure or displeasure over his wife's life; and like it, also, it presents this tragic transcript of household manners in a completely colorless way, so far as moral intention is concerned; and this is done, as in the earlier poem, necessarily, because the incident and the characters are made known through the mouth of the husband himself. In his grim talk with the priest, the main intention is to show the inexorable pride of the Spanish statesman's personality,

whose softening towards his wife and the priest meant simply that, having come to feel less contempt for them, he did them the honor to hate and kill them in cruel ways, each artistically appropriate. Notice particularly the description in "A Forgiveness" of the "arms of Eastern workmanship" and its relation to the character of the main actor and his deed of vengeance. Do you feel any sympathy with this husband, and if so, why? Is it due to the poet that you feel any, and how? Are his dignity and his power of will to work, to restrain himself (notice especially lines 292-304) to attain his ends, qualities that most excite your respect for his character, or your sense of pathos that such a man should indulge in so desolate a vengeance? Are you "sad," the poet seems to ask, through this man's words (line 390), the subtlest sort of artistic indirection, "for whose sake hers, or mine, or his"? Is the verse metrically, and as to rhyme, the same as that of "My Last Duchess"? Study the monologue-form of "A Forgiveness" with a view to exhibiting the skill shown in revealing the characters of all the actors, so far as they relate to the incident given, through the mouth of a single speaker. Should you say that in "Fifine at the Fair" the artistic intention of the poet is richer and more complex than in any of the other poems of this series? Has it historic intention? To what time does it belong, judging by its allusions? Notice lines 528-535, 551, 706, 1107, 1588. Could these denote any other background than the nineteenth century? And would you place Elvire's husband himself, as he is brought out in point of view and character as well as culture, anywhere else than in modern times? May one not be sure that "Fifine at the Fair" will in

the next century or so as certainly betray the artistic intention of the poet to paint a distinctively modern husband contemporaneous with us of to-day as in "My Last Duchess" to paint a husband of the late Renaissance period?

Still another sort of artistic intention revealed through literature instead of history belongs to this poem. Its motto from Molière's "Don Juan" indicates that the poet's design in writing the poem was to take up the Don Juan theme in a way specially suited to meet the spiritual instead of the merely physical side of marriage generally brought forward. And this design is reinforced by the employment through allusion of the interpretation by Euripides of the great Greek marriage myth of Helen. (See, upon this literary evidence of artistic intention, passages in *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IX., pp. xv-xviii). There is in "Fifine," in accord with this, an idea rather symbolistically suggested, that wives typically are nearer spirit than flesh, and represent that side in the relationship and the aspiration toward the spiritual good of love, more purely than husbands do. Compare with "By the Fireside," "Any Wife to Any Husband," the Prologue and Epilogue to "Fifine," and in the "Parleying with Daniel Bartoli," the relations of the Duke and the druggist's daughter.

Do Elvire's brief remonstrances, as re-echoed by the husband, amount to anything, in showing the poet's moral intention in the poem? How otherwise is any glimpse of it to be had, since, as in "My Last Duchess" and "A Forgiveness," the husband himself is the mouthpiece? Does the poet make the apologist condemn himself? And does he take an artistic means to do this or not? In what way, after

all, could he be said to condemn himself? Is it of anything further than lack of development? In what way does the epilogue show the poet's predisposition towards constancy in married love as the fruit of life experience, and how does this agree with the idea of "By the Fireside" and "Any Wife to Any Husband"?

What examples are there in "Fifine" of easy colloquialisms, humor, irony, picturesque and beautiful description, etc.? Are any of these inappropriate to the character of the hero? How does the long six-stressed line suit his nimble mind? (As to metre, see *Camberwell Browning*, Introduction, p. xv.) Has the poem any metaphorical images that are prominently symbolical of its larger meanings? Observe the series of enlargements of the scene by similes seen in a dream, of the crowd in St. Mark's Square, of the carnival of the whole world, of the Druid Temple, etc. Also, especially the use of the swimming metaphor as used by the modern Don Juan, and as used by the poet in the prologue "Amphibian." Is the analogy of the butterfly to the "certain soul which early slipped its sheaf" a reference to Elizabeth Barrett Browning? And do you think his different drift in his employment of the same metaphor, using the unstable element, in swimming, so as to rival progress in the air, and likening his own disporting in poetry on earth to the best mimicry possible to him of her spiritual life in heaven, — is this designed to symbolize the continued companionship of the poet's love and life with that of his wife, to whom he dedicates his poem?

The manner of telling Beatrice Signorini's story differs how from this and most of the preceding

poems? Is it a lyrical expression of a single personality like the first two in the series? Is it a monologue? How many characters appear? How definite an idea of them do you get? Is their speech given directly, and does the poet's view come out also, and how far? Can this and "The Statue and the Bust" be said properly to be written like condensed novels or short stories in verse? Is the verse in metre and rhyme like the monologues of this series?

Is *Artemisia* one of Browning's best examples of the so-called "New Woman," and how does the poet's way of regarding her reveal his point of view toward genius in women?

Queries for Discussion. — What does "The Statue and the Bust" imply? Is this view, —

"Weakness of will in the case of the lovers in this poem wrecked their lives; for they were not strong enough to follow either duty or love." (*Camberwell Browning*, Introduction, Vol. IV., p. xv.) "The closing stanzas point the moral against the palsy of the will, whose strenuous exercise is life's main gift." (*Ibid.*, Notes, Digest, p. 397.) —

or is this view of the poet's moral intention warranted by the poem, —

"Prudence and conventionality . . . count for nothing with the poet. But conventionality counts . . . in our conduct of life. It may have been the 'crowning disaster to miss life' for the man and woman: if so, it was a sacrifice justly due to human society. The sacrifice and self-restraint . . . may have atoned for much that was defective in their lives." (*Browning Cyclopædia*, p. 579.)

Did Browning have any allegorical intention in "The Flight of the Duchess"?

Do you agree with this interpretation by Mrs. Owen of the London Browning Society as put by Dr. Berdoo: —

“The Duke represents our gross self; the retainer who tells the story represents the simple human nature that may either rise with the Duchess or sink with the Duke. The Duchess represents the soul, the highest part of our complex nature. The retainer aids the Duchess, or human nature aids the soul, to free itself from the coarse, low, earth-nature, the Duke. So that the ‘Flight of the Duchess’ is the supreme moment when the soul shakes off the bondage of self and finds its true freedom in others.”

If it is merely a romance, has it none the less an inner meaning of a general nature, and what should you say it was?

How is moral design justifiable in a work of art? Should it have none? How do artists exemplify this question in their work? Illustrate.

Should the artist make a distinction between an inorganic crystallization of his inner meaning and an implication of it more or less unmistakable which grows out of his work and agrees with its artistic structure? Is such a way of conveying moral intention an evidence of the highest artistic skill instead of the contrary? How has Browning done in these poems? Do his poems, whose artistic structure does not agree with conveying moral design, refrain from it; and in the poems which supply direct illustration of their inner meaning, does their artistic construction permit and suit it?

Does a comparison of these poems tend to show that it is a characteristic of Browning to make his imagery agree with his situations and subject-matter?

Do they show that he, more than most poets, puts his imagination into his characters so thoroughly that they rarely make allusions inconsistent with the point of view belonging to their time and character?

Elvire's husband says that "Man takes all and gives naught" in order to develop himself, while woman's part is to bestow all and be absorbed, "Women grow you," and "'t is only men completely formed, full-orbed, are fit to . . . illustrate the leader" ("Fifine," lxxi.-lxxiv.); Francesco Romanelli says of himself, "'Man — by nature I exceed woman the bounded . . . my portion is' — he chose to think — 'quite other than a woman's: I may drink at many waters . . . abler thereby, though impotent before'" ("Beatrice Signorini," 66-131). The comment on this last view, apparently by Browning, is to the effect that Francesco's desire was unjustifiable to make Artemisia's "germ of individual genius — what we term the very self," etc., "his own." Which is the truer view to take of the relations of men and women, — or which, if both are true to life as it is, is the one showing the higher development in life and thought? Compare also Browning's statement that it were "the better impulse," since he could not admit Artemisia's art and her "plain sufficiency of fact that she is she and I am I" (line 70), if he wisely trampled on pride and grew hers, "not mine . . . gain not her but lose myself." Upon this impulse, put aside by Francesco, the poet again comments: "Such love were true love: love that way who can! Some one that's born half woman, not whole man." Does this betray Browning's view of the right trend in the evolution of love?

ART AND THE ARTIST

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I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* —
The Subject-Matter and its Manner of Presentation.

Hints: — For abstracts of subject-matter of the poems, see Notes to *Camberwell Browning*, as given above.

For consideration as to treatment, these poems may be grouped as descriptive of pictures, — "The Guardian Angel," "Eurydice to Orpheus," "A Face." With these may be included "Deaf and Dumb," though the inspiration here is a group of statuary. "Pacchiarotto" is descriptive, being an account of an incident in an artist's life. The most important of the art poems, however, are in dramatic monologue form. All the remaining poems cited are in this form except the slight bit, "The Lady and the Painter," which is in drama form.

Taking up the simpler poems first, we may inquire into the poet's manner of translating a picture into words so that the reader may see it before him.

It is to be observed in "The Guardian Angel" that there is no direct description of the picture, but that in giving expression to the emotions and thoughts aroused, the picture gradually appears in all its details.

In stanza i., by means of the poet's address to the great angel and his expression of the desire that it would leave the child for him, we see that the picture is of an angel and child, and that the angel is ministering to the child. In the second stanza how much more of the picture do we see as the poet imagines how the angel might step out to him and guard him, as it does the child, — that the angel's wings are white, and that the child is praying on a tomb, also that the angel is looking toward heaven? In the third stanza what additional light is given upon the position of the child, and how does the thought of the poet here and in the next two stanzas transcend the picture? (See the picture given as frontispiece to Vol. IV., *Camberwell Browning*.) In stanza vi. he turns from the picture to a friend, Alfred, and addresses him, mentioning the artist, and giving another glimpse of the picture. Does this glimpse add any fresh details? In stanza vii. he tells his friend how he and his own angel (his wife) used to go and see the picture, and what reason does he now give for having written the poem, and for whom does it appear he wrote it? The last three stanzas give the poem almost the effect of a letter. Do you not think that the artistic effect of the poem is somewhat marred by this personal touch at the end?

In "Eurydice to Orpheus" there is no description

of the picture, only the interpretation of the soul of Eurydice as the poet reads it in her face. Would the poem convey a definite impression without any knowledge of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice?

In "Deaf and Dumb," again, the group is not described in detail, but through the thought it inspires in the poet we feel rather than see its beauty.

"A Face" describes in more complete detail a picture after the manner of the early Tuscan art which has been suggested by the beauty of the face. Notice that this differs from the other poems in that it reflects a mood of admiration for exquisite physical beauty, while the others breathe of spiritual beauty, and, as already noted in the case of "The Guardian Angel," the emotions aroused by the picture in the poet make the principal motif of the poem. (For other picture-painting in words in Browning, see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. I., "Pauline," lines 656-667, Notes, p. 308; Vol. VIII., "Balaustion's Adventure," lines 2672-2697, Notes, p. 299.)

"Pacchiarotto" is in the form of a simple narrative told in the poet's own person; but some complexity is introduced through the fact that the story is not told for its own sake, but for the sake of a personal digression on the part of the poet, in which he points a moral against his own critics. (For further discussion of this poem, see Programme "The Autobiographical Poems.")

Among those art poems which we have designated as dramatic monologues, there is considerable variation of treatment. "Old Pictures in Florence," for example, being evidently an expression of the poet's own thoughts, might more properly be called a soliloquy than a dramatic monologue, yet the style is so

conversational, the poet frequently breaking out in direct address to some old artist-worthy or some dull critic, that the effect is thoroughly lively and dramatic.

Having become familiar with the subject-matter of the monologues by aid of the notes, it is interesting to inquire into the details of its presentation. In "Old Pictures in Florence," the poet gives first (stanzas i. and ii.) a general description of the scene that meets his gaze as he looks out over the villa-gate, until his attention is especially attracted by what? Can you guess why Giotto's tower startled him? Perhaps because it suggests to him vivid thoughts concerning art and artists, out of which grow conceptions of the place the Campanile holds in the development of art; or else because it suddenly reminds him, as he playfully pretends, of a special claim he has on the recognition of artist-ghosts which it stings him to the heart to feel that they have disregarded. This special claim seems to be that he is guiltless of the carelessness which the world in general shows to the tentative work of all artists and all stages of art. From the especial apostrophe to Giotto which the sight of the bell-tower calls out, in stanza iv. he falls into reminiscences of what he had done on winter afternoons, in the course of which he draws contrasts between the things that interest the men of Florence and that interest him, — the old pictures. The neglect of these next brings to his mind the fame of the Rafaels, etc., and he pictures what their state of mind may be in comparison with the "wronged great souls," which causes him to wax indignant at those "of the little wit" who cannot appreciate these early artists, and results in his giving them instruction. What does he declare to be the

characteristics of Greek art? Observe the graphic way in which he describes Greek art as presenting ideals of beauty and power to mankind which they aspired toward but could not attain unto. What did they learn from this constant consciousness of their own weakness compared with the strength of Greek art? Does the poet appear to consider the lesson learnt a good one?

Continuing stanza xv. with his "instructions," what does he declare to be the very essence of growth, and how did the early Italian painters discover this and illustrate in their works this new attitude toward life? In stanza xx. he turns from instructing to exhorting the unappreciative to give honor to those pioneer artists who began the great revolution. Here the poet has a beautiful fancy as to the future life; what is it? and how does his mood change in the next stanza? In xxiii. he enlarges upon his own love of these early artists, and goes on to what he calls his especial grievance. Here (xxiv.) follows a humorous description of the ghosts of the early painters watching the whitewashing, etc. of their pictures, then departing down the black streets; and the poet declares himself aggrieved that they never reveal to him any of the lost treasures they must know about. Then he goes on to particularize those from whom he would expect nothing and those he thinks might remember him, leading up finally to Giotto, against whom it now appears is his special grievance, as was hinted in stanza iii. Describe what this grievance is and what he declares will be the final upshot. In anticipative gratitude at this result he takes up a strain of prophecy which continues to the end of the poem. What is this prophecy?

In "Pictor Ignotus" we have a true dramatic monologue, though not at all a complex one, for it portrays but one character, the unknown painter, who, after breaking forth with straightforward directness in regard to his having been able to paint as well as the youth all are praising, goes on to explain how he had not been hindered by fate, why? Because he had the inspiration in his soul, observation equally penetrating for the mysteries of heaven, of his own soul, and of life around him; and moreover the mechanical skill to put into form his thoughts. Observe with what exquisite language he now describes the emotions and passions he might have portrayed. In line 23 he doubts for a moment whether he has not wasted his powers. How does this feeling change in the next line? From the ecstasy he feels in the thought of the pictures he might have painted, he passes on to the thought of the happiness it would have been to have had these pictures loved and himself loved because of them. He wakes now from these ecstasies to tell why he could not follow his artistic inspiration, and had thus made his choice as he willed. Notice that only through description of the feelings he has as he works, do we learn for the first time what that work really was.

Does this poem resemble "The Guardian Angel" in that its living principle is the moods and emotions of the artist, and the facts we learn in this case as to his talent, his character, and the conditions of his life, do not come out by means of any direct description, but as the necessary expression of his moods?

"Fra Lippo Lippo" is an example of a more complex monologue. Observe how through Lippo's talk we get a complete picture, not only of Lippo

himself, but of the functionaries who are detaining him, of the successive actions in the scene, and of the time and place where it is being enacted. Reading through line 44, what do you learn of him? What do you learn of the looks of his detainers, and of their actions? After he has picked out the one he sees to be most friendly, he proceeds to tell him how he comes to be wandering about the streets so late at night. What effect does his story have upon his friend? (See line 76.)

Since the friendly individual's sympathy is not wholly aroused by this tale, and he is inclined to question how it is that a monk should enjoy such escapades, the clever Lippo goes on to give an account of his childhood and the way he came to be a monk. Note Lippo's wit and humor as he tells this story. "What came next?" we may imagine his friend to inquire. To which he replied by telling of the difficulties that beset the monks in discovering what he was fit for. How did he show them what his natural bent was, and how does he say his observation as a child was sharpened? The monks would have turned him adrift for his artistic propensities, but what does the Prior say? When Lippo is allowed to give rein to his talent, how and what does he describe himself as painting? And how did the monks regard it? But what do the Prior and the learned say about his art? To their criticisms what does Lippo retort? Having given this account of himself, he goes on (line 223) to apologize a little for himself. How? And then to tell how in spite of the fact that he is his own master now, the early criticisms still have their effect upon him. Is his question about whether they with their

Latin know, sarcastic, or the expression of a dormant reverence for the opinion of those who are learned?

The result of this conflict in his nature between his natural bent and its suppression by criticism is, as he goes on to say, what? Observe how, in the lines following this up to line 269, he forgets all restraint and gives vent to his unvarnished opinion of those who criticise the realism of his work. At this point he grows stronger in his own opinion, and prophesies that such work as his will be the work of the future. Who has he already as a pupil? Then he appeals to his friend to judge for himself as to whether his view of life and art is not higher than the old one. What supposed objections does he meet? and what are the main points in his argument? Observe how he works up to a climax of feeling which shows that to the soul of Lippo beauty, natural and physical, was in itself a divine revelation. He finishes with another outbreak against the "fools," and suddenly remembering himself, he grows humble and apologetic again, and promises to make amends. What does he say he will do to make amends, and how does he characteristically describe the picture which will make things all right with the Church again? It is evident that his arguments finally convinced his friend among the guard who "nabbed" him, for he goes off home in the early morning light.

Is this long talk of Lippo's rendered natural through the fact that he and one of the guards took a fancy to each other? Can we suppose that his listener appreciated all his remarks, or that he was simply taken with his manner and personality?

In "Andrea del Sarto" the presentation is in the

same manner as in "Fra Lippo Lippi." The reader is immediately brought face to face with the hero of the poem. He is speaking, and in the course of his talk we see not only him but his wife, learn the sort of relation that exists between them, and get a glimpse of their past life.

What is the time and the scene, and what is he promising his wife he will do to-morrow? But what does he desire to do at that moment? As he looks at her, he sees in his mind's eye a picture of themselves; how does he describe it? From this he turns to a comparison of his own style and capabilities as an artist with those of other celebrated painters. Give the gist of what he says.

Overwhelmed here by the sense of his own lack, he gently upbraids his wife for not having been more of an inspiration to him. Does he feel quite sure that if she had been different he would have succeeded better? Or does he seem to think that his life has been ruled by a sort of divine fate? Or has he some suspicion that his own lack of will-power is responsible for it? (See line 139.) His conclusion that God will reward or punish in the end, brings to his mind the fact that it will be safer if he is not too much rewarded in this world, and he falls into a reminiscence of his past life. What comes out in regard to his life to explain his feeling that it will be safer if he does not get too much award here? He comes back to the present (line 175), and comparing Rafael's picture of the Virgin with his own for which his wife sat, imagines what men might say of these two pictures. This puts him in mind of another reminiscence about himself. What was it? At the thought of this praise he ventures to grasp the chalk and correct the

arm in a picture of Rafael's. He had in his room a copy (see line 106). Why only does he care for the praise?

We come now to the closing scene, — the wife smiling because she hears the cousin's whistle; Andrea going on talking, so filled with his own thoughts that he thinks the smile for him, and feeling a little encouraged, asking her to come inside. Then he realizes the cousin has been calling. He recurs to his request made at the beginning of the poem, and repeats his promise: and what does he declare will be the best thing about the money he is to receive? Describe his final mood, his apology for his own sin, his vision of what he might do in heaven, and the recurring certainty that he would be "overcome" because of his wife, Lucrezia, and, finally, the triumph of his love over every other thought in the words "as I choose," and of his unselfishness in his bidding her go to her cousin.

Observe how, by indirections as it were, the wife's personality is clearly presented (see lines 4, 20-33, 38, 54-56, 74-75, 117-132, 166, 199-202, 219-223, 228, 241-243). Is Andrea more completely under one influence than Fra Lippo?

In "The Bishop Orders his Tomb," we have a connoisseur in art instead of an artist. As a monologue, this is not quite so complex as the preceding one, because it is almost entirely a revelation of the Bishop's own character, the "nephews" whom he addresses not appearing as very strong personalities unless the old Bishop's fear that they would not execute his orders be taken as an index of their character. Besides the Bishop's character, however, we learn something of the incidents of his life. What are these? We get, furthermore, a vivid picture of the splendor of

his tomb. Describe it. Observe all through the poem how subtly is portrayed in the Bishop the combination of human nature with its passions and hates and envies, and his churchly training that breaks out in pious exclamations from time to time; also the jumble of Greek and Christian art he wishes to have in his tomb. In his ideal of his future enjoyment when he is dead (see line 80 and fol.), do his pagan or his churchly instincts conquer? Do you feel at the end that he is not going to get his tomb, or that he is, through a life of suspiciousness, afraid his "nephews" will not carry out his orders in spite of all he offers them?

"The Lady and the Painter" is a very simple poem cast in dialogue form to point a moral which is evidently the poet's own opinion. What is this opinion?

Queries for Discussion. — Is the manner of presentation in each case especially suited to the subject in hand?

Are all these monologues dramatic, in the sense that they show movement in events? If they do not show movement in events, in what does their dramatic quality consist?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — Sources and Allusions in relation to Subject-Matter.

Hints: — The poems in this group show a variety in the nature of the sources as well as a variety in the manner of treatment. Pictures in two cases were the sole source of inspiration, in another a group of statuary. In these instances the source is so intimately connected with the subject-matter, that in giving the manner of presentation, as in the preceding topic, all

is said about the sources and their relation to the poems that need be said. The remainder of the poems may be classified, broadly speaking, as deriving their subject-matter from biographical sources, — namely, “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “Andrea del Sarto,” “Pacchiarotto;” from an artistic emotion, in “Old Pictures,” “The Lady and the Painter,” and “Face;” from historico-artistic conditions, in “Pictor Ignotus” and “The Bishop Orders his Tomb.” The direct biographical source of “Fra Lippo Lippi” is found in Vasari’s “Lives of the Italian Painters.” As an example of how closely the poet modelled his facts upon those taken from Vasari, we may make the following comparisons (drawn from the Notes, “Select Poems of Browning,” published by T. Y. Crowell & Co.), “The Carmelite Monk, Fra Filippo di Tommaso Lippi, was born in a bye street . . . behind the convent.” See the poem, line 7. “Cosimo de Medici, wishing him to execute a work in his own palace, shut him up, that he might not waste his time in running about; but having endured this confinement for two days he made ropes with the sheets of his bed . . . let himself down from the window . . . and for several days gave himself up to his amusements.” See poem, lines 15, 47. “By the death of his father he was left a friendless orphan at the age of two years . . . for some time under the care of Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, who brought him up with very great difficulty till his eighth year, when being no longer able to support the burden, she placed him in the convent of the Carmelites. . . . Placed with others under the care of a master to . . . see what could be done with him; in place of studying he never did anything but daub his books with caricatures, whereupon the prior deter-

mined to give him . . . opportunity for learning to draw. The chapel, then newly painted by Masaccio . . . he frequented, and practising there — surpassed all the others . . . while still very young painted a picture in the cloister . . . with others in fresco . . . among these "John the Baptist." See the poem, lines 81, 129, 136, 196. "For the nuns of Sant' Ambrogio he painted a most beautiful picture." See the poem, line 345. Vasari says that by means of this picture he became known to Cosimo. Observe that this does not agree with the poem, as in that Lippo is already known to Cosimo when he promises to paint the picture of the coronation of the Virgin. It appears that the poet is right here, and Vasari wrong. See notes to edition of Vasari cited below. Do you observe any other inaccuracies in the mere facts? From these extracts it may be perceived that Browning has turned a very dry record of events into a living reality, and how has he done this? By so seeing into the heart and impulses of the man that he re-creates his personality and enables us to see life as it was seen by Lippo? (For further study of the life of "Lippo," see Mrs. Jameson's "Early Italian Painters," also Vasari's "Lives," edited by E. H. & E. W. Blashfield and A. A. Hopkins, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y.) Is there any incident of Lippo's life which might have suggested to him the incident in the poem of the "little lily thing" that encouraged him? See lines 370-387.

Give an account of the allusions in the poem (see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. V., p. 287), and show how they all grow naturally out of the subject-matter, that is, they do not come under the head of *embellishments*. Even the flower-songs, though they

add greatly to the beauty of the poem, come perfectly naturally from the lips of Fra Lippo. (For further information as to these songs, see *Poet-lore*, Vol. II., p. 262, or Miss Alma Strettel's "Spanish and Italian Folk-Songs.")

Vasari's "Lives" furnished the source for the characterization of "Andrea del Sarto" also. In this case, however, there is the added source of the picture of Andrea and his wife, which really forms the scene-setting and tone of the poem. (See Notes, *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., p. 289.)

As in the case of "Lippo," extracts may be made from Vasari showing the facts that Browning transmuted from dry bones into living realities. For example: "He destroyed his own peace and estranged his friends by marrying Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede, a cap-maker's widow who ensnared him before her husband's death, and who delighted in trapping the hearts of men . . . he soon became jealous and found that he had fallen into the hands of an artful woman who made him do as she pleased in all things . . . but although Andrea lived in torment he yet accounted it a high pleasure." See poem, line 1 fol. "Art and nature combined to show all that may be done in painting when design, coloring, and invention unite in the same person. Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind . . . he would have been without an equal. But there was a certain timidity of mind, a sort of diffidence and want of force in his nature, which rendered it impossible that . . . ardor and animation, which are proper to the more exalted character should ever appear in him. . . . His figures are well drawn . . . free from errors . . . the coloring exquisite." See

poem, lines 60, 82, fol. "Andrea understood the management of light and shade most perfectly, causing the objects depicted to take their due degree of prominence or to retire within the shadows." See poem, line 98. "If he had remained in Rome when he went thither to see the works of Raffaello and Michelagnolo . . . would eventually have attained the power of imparting a more elevated character and increased force to his figures . . . nay, there are not wanting those who affirm he would . . . have surpassed all the artists of his time . . . Raffaello and other young artists whom he perceived to possess great power . . . deprived Andrea, timid as he was, of courage to make trial of himself." See poem, line 76 fol. "Two pictures he had sent into France, obtaining much admiration from King Francis . . . that monarch was told he might prevail upon Andrea to visit France . . . the King therefore gave orders that a sum of money should be paid to Andrea for the expenses of the journey . . . his arrival was marked by proofs of liberality and courtesy . . . his labors rendering him so acceptable to the King and the whole court, his departure from his native country appeared . . . to have conducted him from wretchedness to felicity . . . But one day . . . came to him certain letters from Florence written to him by his wife . . . with bitter complaints . . . Moved by all this he resolved to resume his chain . . . Taking the money which the King confided to him for the purchase of pictures and statues . . . he set off . . . having sworn on the gospels to return in a few months. Arrived in Florence, he lived joyously with his wife for some time, making presents to her father and sisters, but doing nothing for his

own parents, who died in poverty and misery. When the period specified by the King had come . . . he found himself at the end not only of his own money but . . . of that of the King . . . remained in Florence, therefore, procuring a livelihood as he best might." See poem, line 149, fol. Though not bearing on the poem in any way, it will be found interesting to read in the notes to the edition of Vasari already mentioned of the attempts which have been made to prove that the story of Andrea's embezzlement was false. In fact, the statement rests entirely upon Vasari's authority, and excellent reasons have been adduced to show that he might easily have been mistaken.

Observe with what sympathetic insight Browning has looked at the miserable record of this man, and how he has emphasized whatever of nobleness there was in his character, making not the least noble thing about him his devotion to his wife, whom he was fated to love, whatever her faults might be.

Are the allusions in this poem related to the subject-matter in the same way as those in "Fra Lippo Lippi"? (For allusions, see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. V., p. 289.)

The story told in "Pacchiarotto" is also derived from Vasari, and is to be found in the commentary of the Florence edition of his "Lives" printed in 1855. As an example of the way the poet has used his source in this poem, a few citations may be given :

"Among the principal and most ardent of the Bardotti was our Giacomo, whose head was so turned by the whims and vagaries of the State, that among many of his foolish pranks, it is related, that in a room of his house which was situated on the Via

Laterino, he had painted many faces, so that, standing in the midst of them, he appeared to be holding a long discussion, as if they in turn replied, and as their lord revered and honored him.

This is expanded into the account which runs through seven stanzas (see v.—xi.) besides being led up to by the four preceding stanzas. Point out the amplifications Browning has made upon this hint.

“During the exile of Fabio and the murder of Alessandro Bichi, a new sect of people sprung up in Siena, who from their open avowals of lawless principles were called the Libertines. These, having become arrogant, on account of success having been on their side in every faction against the tyrants of the city, as they called them, and even against foreign enemies, these Libertines therefore meddled with every important scheme of the Republic, and tried to gain all the honors and high offices for themselves. . . . They called upon the common people to aid them, making many promises to help them in return, which was the occasion that the common people and artisans of lowest extraction were turned aside from their daily life, and their time occupied in attending meetings where they listened to incendiary language against the affairs of the State. . . . Out of these meetings sprung the Congregation or Academy called the Bardotti, a name which really had no other significance than that which they chose to give it: an easy life at the public expense.” Compare this with stanzas xiii. and xiv.

“The Bardotti, believing circumstances to be of bad augury for them, had recourse to the aid and counsels of a few citizens who formerly had favored them; but receiving from them only reproofs for their

misdeeds, and no promises to protect them from justice, and terrified by their impending fate, they fled and hid themselves. Il Pacchiarotto, likewise, seized with great terror, wandered about like one demented throughout the city, thinking the sheriff was always dogging his footsteps in order to seize him and take him to prison. Finally he went into the parish church of San Giovanni, and saw a tomb where but recently had been covered a dead body ; he pushed it aside, and fixed himself there as best he could, and covered the tomb over with the stone. Here he remained in intense suffering of mind and body during two days, at the end of which time, half dead with hunger and the insupportable stench of the corpse, and covered with vermin, he fled through one of the gates of the city, which leads to the house of refuge of the brothers of the Observance. Il Pacchiarotto, when he thought the storm had passed, quietly returned to Siena, and, having been made aware by bitter experience what his follies had cost him, he resolved to apply himself to his work and no longer meddle with the affairs of State."

Compare this with stanzas xvi.—xx. See also xxiii. At stanza xx. the poet declares he is going to let his fancy have rein in the admonishment of the Abbot. What is this admonishment, and how does the poet make Pacchiarotto reply ? Does this poem lose in artistic force because of the fact that the incident is told and enlarged upon, simply to furnish a text for a philippic against critics ? This poem has a great many allusions, for explanation of which see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. IX., p. 294. Point out how they are related to the subject-matter.

In "Old Pictures in Florence" the direct source

might be said to be the incident of the poet's missing an art treasure which fell into some one else's hands. However, this is, in reality, only a sort of stage fixture throwing a side light of humor over the whole poem, the true source being the poet's own artistic enthusiasm for the works of the old painters, and out of this grow his appreciations and his criticisms. Would the poem have been any stronger as a criticism of art if he had not toned it to this humorous incident? Does this incident, on the other hand, give the poem an artistic value it might not otherwise have by making the thoughts that cluster around it less didactic? Are they less didactic because they really grow out of an emotional mood rather than a critical one?

In "Face" the artistic appreciation of a beautiful face gives rise to the imaging of the face as it would look in a picture.

An emotion of indignation at those who wear bird's feathers in their hats and at those who object to the nude in art is the source of the dialogue, in "The Lady and the Painter," between an imaginary painter and an imaginary lady. Does it result in a very convincing argument either way?

In the two remaining poems, "Pictor Ignotus" and "The Bishop Orders his Tomb," the characters are imaginary, but they are set in an environment, and their personality is such that they belong to an especial historical epoch. The sources of such poems as these are in the knowledge of all the forces that go to the making of a certain period, — in this case, that of the Renaissance in Italy. The Bishop is the type of character that might be produced by the influences at work. What were these? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. V., 291, Introduction, p. xvi, fol.

For further information, see Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," Symonds's "The Italian Renaissance," and Vernon Lee's "Italian Studies.")

Observe how completely this Renaissance spirit is made to breathe forth through the character of one single man, and how completely the age dominates the personality of the man. Notice that the poem is headed "Rome, 15—" Did the Renaissance movement differ in any of its characteristics here from those in other Italian cities?

In "Pictor Ignotus" there is portrayed a personality as different from the Bishop's as could well be imagined. How does it happen that he, too, is a picture of the Renaissance? The same two influences are seen in him, are they not?—in his choosing to paint religious pictures and in his desire to paint life? But in this case the personality of the man is stronger than the age, and he deliberately chooses to suppress in himself the aspiration toward painting human life, not because he would consider it any less noble art, but because he reverences it so that he could not bear to subject it to just the sort of frivolous criticism that a bishop might give it. Whereas in the Bishop churchly traditions were but a matter of form, in the painter of "Pictor Ignotus" religion had entered into his very soul. (For further information, see books referred to above.) Give an account of all the allusions, and show in these latter poems how close the relation is between them and the subject-matter, and how many of them are introduced simply as embellishments to the language.

Queries for Discussion.—Is the poet justified in interpreting facts of history or biography to suit the needs of artistic presentation as he does in the poems

on Andrea and Lippo, for example? Upon this point Mr. Arthur Symonds has to say: "Whether the picture which suggested the poem is an authentic work of Andrea, or whether—as experts are now pretty well agreed—it is a work by an unknown artist representing an imaginary man and woman, is, of course, of no possible consequence in connection with the poem. Nor is it of any more importance that the Andrea of Vasari is in all probability not the real Andrea. Historic fact has nothing to do with poetry: it is mere material, the mere quarry of ideas; and the real truth of Mr. Browning's portrait of Andrea would no more be impugned by the establishment of Vasari's inaccuracy, than the real truth of Shakespeare's portrait of Macbeth by the proof of the untrustworthiness of Holinshed."

In which of these poems is the source most closely related to the subject-matter, and in which of them does the poet's imagination hold the largest place?

Along what different lines does the imagination work in these various poems?

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—The Relations of Art to Character in Browning's Artist Portraits.

Hints: — The unknown painter of "Pictor Ignotus," Fra Lippo, Andrea del Sarto, and the Bishop of St. Praxed's step to the front upon the mention of Browning's artist portraits. We see at once that they represent four entirely different types of men. How would you describe their respective personalities as gathered from the poems? How is it made evident that the unknown artist was a man of transcendent genius? Besides this, he was a lover of humanity, was he not? How is this shown? Was he a lover

of humanity as it is, or rather as he thought it ought to be? Is there any touch of conceit in the desire that he should be loved on account of his pictures? Would you consider him a stronger character if he had done the best that was in him, regardless of how humanity might talk or act? Or do you feel that his sensitiveness in regard to the need of loving human appreciation and sympathy is a peculiarly refined aspect of his nature? Is it not a feeling natural to the great artist to revolt against the thought of the commercializing of his art? In speaking of this poem Mr. Symons says he "has dreamed of painting great pictures and winning great fame, but shrinks equally from the attempt and the reward: an attempt which he is too self-distrustful to make, a reward which he is too painfully discriminating to enjoy." Do you perceive anything in the poem to indicate that he was too "distrustful" of himself to make the attempt to paint? Does he not rather seem absolutely certain of his own powers? (line 2-3, "No bar stayed me," "Never did fate forbid me," etc.) The reason he did not make the attempt was because he so revered art and his own gift of art that he could not subject it to the gross atmosphere of daily, worldly life, and so he chose to imprison his genius in monotonous frescos for the church; why? Not certainly because he desired to serve God this way, but because these pictures would be safe from the rude intrusion of unsympathetic humanity. Does he seem to regret his decision, or is he satisfied that fame would have been a poor exchange for the consciousness he possesses of a genius preserved unsullied from the world? Compare him with Aprile in "Paracelsus," Part II., lines 420-487. Observe that Aprile would have liked to

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be translated to heaven when he finished his work, while this unknown painter wished to linger on earth. What is the difference in these two natures? Is it that one wished to give out love by means of his art, and the other wished to draw love to himself by means of his art? Which would be the more human, and which the more religious or aspiring attitude?

Has Fra Lippo any sensitiveness of nature? He is a lover of human life, like the unknown painter, but there is a difference. Is it that the unknown painter loves the soul, — the hopes, passions, aspirations of man, — while Lippo we discover to be an adorer of the physically beautiful? Are his arguments in favor of the beauty of the flesh convincing? Notice that while he emphasizes external beauty, he by no means ignores the soul; although he says, "if you get simple beauty and nought else you get about the best thing God invents," in the same breath he says he never saw beauty with no soul at all. Yet the "soul" of beauty that Lippo sees is not quite the same as the soul the unknown painter sees, because one recognizes the divine essence of beauty, the other the divine essence of human aspiration or religion. Which of these do you think is the larger conception of soul, or does either of them include the other? Might there be a third attitude larger still which would include both?

While Lippo's nature is certainly not sensitive, does he not possess a certain amount of timidity through his early ecclesiastical training? How does this come out? Does his moral looseness come naturally from his artistic attitude? Does he give you the impression of being a bad man, that is, a man with design to do as much harm as possible, or an impul-

sive man, filled with the joy of mere physical existence, and unable to resist the pleasures of an occasional worldly frolic? In his revolt against the asceticism of the early Church, he naturally goes too far the other way. Are his theories of realism in advance of his practices in life? Observe that in spite of his realism he has an idealistic tendency, for he says we must beat nature. Is he right when he says, "We love first when we see them painted, things we have passed perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see"? Do you agree with him that beauty of form is necessary for the highest expression of soul? Do you agree with him that more of a spiritual uplift may be gained from the presentation of beautiful form than from pictures with an avowed didactic purpose? (See lines 317-335.)

"Andrea del Sarto" has neither the idealism of the unknown painter nor the joy in life of Lippo. He is depressed yet philosophical over the lack of power he feels in himself. How is this made evident? He points out just what his failures are, but are his complaints at all bitter? He has a vision of what he might have done had his wife given him true love and sympathy, but he seems to feel that such thoughts are vain, because it was she whom he perforce must love. It has been suggested that he could scarcely be justified in blaming his wife for his failures in life, for the fault was with him in pouring his affection upon so shallow and soulless a woman. But might it not be said, in reply to this, that love if genuine is given in spite of whatever faults the loved one may have?

Could any amount of love on his part justify his stealing in order to gratify Lucrezia's whims or his

looking over her flirtations with other men? Yet even in a New Jerusalem he cannot imagine himself painting without his passion for Lucrezia, and this he feels will drag him down, and he will always be surpassed by Leonardo, Rafael, and Agnolo, who have no wives. On the other hand, is not his love for Lucrezia the finest point in his character, its constancy, its effacement of self even to the point of sinning for her sake? The question is whether this is strength of love or weakness of character. Is there anything to be said of Lucrezia except that she is utterly detestable?

Does he give correct impressions of his own work? Are his criticisms of the other artists and his comparisons of his own work with theirs good? In the case both of Lippo and Andrea, has Browning conceived their personalities partly from the character of their paintings?

Do you feel sympathetic with Andrea as Browning has presented him, or disgusted with him? His love was so powerful a force in his character that his will was weakened. If the fates had decreed that he should love one whose sympathy would have strengthened his will, he might have accomplished that of which he dreamed, but after all is said, he seems to feel that his love is of more importance to him than anything else. Is this turn a characteristic one with Browning?

In contrast with these three, for all of whom we feel sympathy for one reason or another, the Bishop appears as an utterly unlovable old man. He loves art and even his church solely for the sake of the personal glory he can get out of it. Show how this is brought out.

A still worse feeling is his rivalry with old Gandolf,

and his desire to rouse his old enemy's everlasting envy with his tomb. Has he one single redeeming quality? (For further remarks on the Bishop, see Programme on "The Prelate.")

Queries for Discussion. — Is it shown in all of these poems that the man affects his art more than he is affected by it?

Which of these artists are portrayed with the most consistency? Do Lippo and Andrea branch out into abstract artistic principles not in keeping with their character?

If there are any such flights, is it not quite natural for human beings in their best moments of thought to express ideals far beyond their general practice?

IV. *Topic for Paper, Glasswork, or Private Study.*
— Art Criticism in Browning's Art Poems.

Hints: — The art monologues may all be taken as illustrating different periods in the growth of art, while in two of them the speaker presents all there is to be said for his especial manifestation in art. In "Old Pictures in Florence" the early Christian artists receive directly from the poet their due share of appreciation, especially as contrasted with the Greek art. In "Fra Lippo Lippi" the realist in revolt against those very pioneer Christian artists is made to defend his ground and to show the idealism lurking in realism. Andrea, again, stands for formalism, his best defence being that the artists who are perfect in technique though lacking in inspiration at least do the best they can. Besides the defence of the early Christian artists in "Old Pictures in Florence," there is implied in the poem that all exponents and schools of art are related parts of the general scheme of man's growth. That the poet

is in sympathy with all schools is shown by his masterly presentation in these various poems of the claims of each. This artistic creed receives further exemplification in the "Parleyings," in that with "Gerard de Lairese," whose special characteristic was the embellishment of every-day nature with borrowed classical imaginings. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. XII., p. 344.) Browning, in talking with Gerard, comes to the conclusion (see stanzas xiii. to end) that while art should go on to ever-fresh manifestations and should not try to re-suscitate the past, yet past art manifestations are not to be thrown away, but preserved for their worth as the blossoming of past phases of growth. Professor Daniel Dorchester, writing of Browning's Philosophy of Art, says: "An art critic, intent only upon literal accuracy, would not accept the judgments expressed in these poems without many qualifications. He would cite, for example, the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto in the entrance court of Santa Annunciata in Florence, — their great dignity, their fresh passion and imagination, as evidence that Andrea was more than the clever realist Browning has described. Sandro, better known as Botticelli, is classified by Browning in his 'Old Pictures in Florence' with Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, and Cimabue, but Botticelli was a pupil of Fra Lippo Lippi, who ushered in the next period of Italian art. Many such criticisms might be made, but they do not invalidate the truth of Browning's art poems. His principle of classification transcends such minor distinctions, and is concerned with the exemplification in art of certain types of character. Andrea del Sarto, it is true, occasionally rises to a great dignity of expression, but

the general level of his art was low, stereotyped, and sordid. Botticelli, though a pupil of Lippi, had a strong individuality, and belonged in spirit to the school of Giotto. Few painters have made every part of their work so tributary to an idea, or striven more earnestly after ideal beauty.

“In the poem, ‘Old Pictures in Florence,’ Browning shows that romantic art in its crude form is superior to Greek art in its perfection, simply because it manifests a higher ideal of the human soul. He is not unmindful of the glory of the Grecian character and art. The very atmosphere in which the Greeks lived was pellucid, and their thought was like it. They had, too, an intense love of sensuous beauty . . . so nurtured that it became their master passion. . . . The spirit of man for a time saw its ideal realized in the grand and beautiful forms of the Grecian divinities.

“But no sensuous representation, however excellent, could long seem an adequate expression to the developing soul of man.

“Spirit alone can satisfy spirit, and only in its own realm, the inner realm of the soul, can it find its true reality. In the decadence of Grecian art in proportion as there was a surrender to outer vision and as bodily charm was sought as an end, the human spirit turned its gaze inward and communed with its own loftier ideals. . . . Then Christianity came, insisting upon the Divine Spirit as the absolute ideal, and glorifying the soul at the expense of the body if need be.” This spiritual beauty “it was the mission of romantic art to reveal.” (Boston Browning Society Papers.)

Observe further that Lippo and Andrea represent two *different but* actual types of the artists of the

Renaissance, while "Pictor Ignotus" and the "Bishop" represent two imaginary types of Renaissance artists, neither of whom takes any active part in the development of art. Should you say that the former stood for the utmost idealism of this great movement, and the latter for its utmost grossness? (For studies of the Renaissance, see books cited above and "Renaissance Pictures in Robert Browning's Poetry," *Poet-lore*, Vol. X., pp. 66-76, Jan. 1898.)

By thus presenting these different types does Browning indicate more clearly than in any other way the complexity of this movement?

In "Pacchiarotto" we have a criticism of the art-critic rather than of art, and although the application is made to point at literary critics, the principle would apply just as well to art-critics, and this fundamental principle is that critics cannot make all artists conform to their notions of art any more than Pacchiarotto could reform the world and make everybody toe the mark according to his own notions,—in other words, that the true artist or genius always transcends the cut and dried rules of the critics. What corner of art criticism is touched upon in "The Lady and the Painter"? For further expression of opinion on this subject, see the "Parleyings," that with "Francis Furini," through stanza vii., also xi., line 557 to end.

Queries for Discussion.—Is Browning's theory that art should find its own new expression with every phase of life sound? Is it opposed to the generally accepted theory that there are definite standards in art?

Is Greek art so little expressive of aspiration as Browning seems to think in "Old Pictures in Florence"?

Might it be said that to-day we can get more of a

spiritual vision from Greek art by reading into its perfect form our own ideals, while in the early Christian art the poverty of form makes us see only the ascetic ideal of the early Christian?

V. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
— The Workmanship of the Poems.

Hints: — Notice the stanza-form of “The Guardian Angel.” It is made up of a quatrain, a couplet, and an extra line binding the stanza together by rhyming with the first and third of the quatrain. Do you observe any other point about the rhyming? How many accents are there to the line? Is the verse so regular that it may easily be scanned by feet? What is the metre, and are there any irregularities? Upon what does this poem depend chiefly for its music, — harmonious combinations of words, alliteration, smooth rhythm, or figures of speech?

Does the apparently careless cleverness of the rhymes and the familiar, personal, almost chatting tone of “Old Pictures” cheapen the dignity of its philosophy, or does it accord with the poet’s conception of the poem as a whole and add to its originality and effectiveness? How many accents are there to the line? and what is the rhyme-scheme? Are there any departures from the alternately rhyming lines of the opening stanzas, or any irregularities in the accents? Are there any rhymes you consider faulty or extravagant? If there are such to you, when taken separately, can you, upon study of the context and the air of the whole, show that they fall in well in their places as related to the rest of the poem? What figures are there in the poem? Examine the appropriateness of each to the design of the poem and to the sense, in its place.

"Pictor Ignotus" is made up of quatrains all joined together in one long paragraph. The effect of this is to make the verse flow continuously from beginning to end, without the usual breaks in the thought caused by the division into stanzas. What is the metre in this? Point out any variations you may perceive. There are many beautiful poetic figures in this poem; point them out, also the lines where alliteration occurs.

Notice that the difference in management of subject-matter between "Old Pictures" and "Andrea del Sarto" and "Fra Lippo Lippi" is matched by a corresponding difference in workmanship. Although a colloquial air is given the first poem by its easy pace and rhymes, "Fra Lippo" is decidedly more representative of easy talking, as it should be to convey its sense of dramatic dialogue and incident. How is this effect secured? Notice that it is in blank verse, not rhyme, and that its blank verse is facile, not stately. Is this effect produced by the character of the language and the shortness of the sentences? How does "Andrea del Sarto" differ? Is it more like "Old Pictures" or "Fra Lippo" as to its style of verse? How does it differ from both? How is the quieter style of Andrea effected? Is it suited to the subject-matter? Examine and explain the appropriateness of the figures.

Observe the difference in the atmosphere of "Lippo" and "Andrea," — Lippo, sort of devil-may-care, breaking out every now and then into an Italian love-song.

Compare the blank verse of "The Bishop Orders his Tomb" with that of the other two blank-verse poems, and observe here the different atmosphere. Is

it due to any difference in the structure of the verse, or simply to the language put into the Bishop's mouth? Compare the different stanza forms of "Deaf and Dumb," "Eurydice to Orpheus," and "Face," pointing out their different rhyme schemes, their rhythms, and the character of the language, whether principally realistic or figurative. "Pacchiarotto" is a decided contrast with all the other poems, with its three-stressed lines and double and triple rhymes all through. Mr. Symons says of this poem: "The story is funny enough in itself, and it points an excellent moral; but it is chiefly interesting as a whimsical freak of verse, an extravaganza in staccato. The rhyming is of its kind simply perfect. . . . I think all other experiments of the kind, however successful as a whole, let you see now and then that the author has had a hard piece of work to keep up his appearance of ease. In 'Pacchiarotto,' there is no evidence of the strain." In the one remaining poem, "The Lady and the Painter," what are the verse characteristics?

Queries for Discussion. — Is blank verse better suited for the presentation of character than rhymed verse, because of the entire freedom it gives in the construction of sentences of any length? Has "Pictor Ignotus," in spite of its rhymes, something of the freedom of blank verse?

Do you find Browning's blank verse in these poems marked by much variation in the distribution of short syllables and of cæsural pauses?

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

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Compare David in "Saul," iv. 66, Notes, 375; lines 942-973 and 1566-1689 in "Fifine at the Fair," ix. 72, Notes, 288.

I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
— The Material and its Modelling.

Hints: — A short account of the gist of each poem may be found in the Notes, *Camberwell Browning*, as given above.

Of this group of poems how many of them have to do with actual musicians? (See notes to the poems as given above. For further information, see Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians;" also papers by Mrs. Alexander Ireland on "A Toccata of Galuppi's," by Miss Helen J. Ormerod on "Abt Vogler the Man" and "Andrea del Sarto and Abt Vogler," "Some Notes on Browning's Poems Referring to Music," by Mrs. Turnbull on "Abt Vogler." These are all suggestive papers, though full of inaccuracies on technical musical points which must be guarded against, and colored too much in their interpretations by the supposition that the

compositions in the poems must be regarded as beautiful specimens of musical art.)

It will be found that the relation of the musician to the poem he figures in varies considerably with the different poems. For instance, in "A Toccata of Galuppi's" it is a particular composition of this master that starts the train of thought; in "Master Hugues" it is a particular form of composition; in "Abt Vogler" the man and his relation as creator to his music is the inspiration, while in "Charles Avison" a special composition again gives rise to the conversation with its composer. In only one of these poems is the musician whose name appears the speaker; which is it? Who is the speaker in the other cases? The language made use of in these poems is so full of musical technicalities that, as a preliminary to their proper comprehension, it is necessary to explain these allusions. (For those in "A Toccata," see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. IV., p. 369.)

This poem opens by the speaker's directly addressing Galuppi as to the meaning he perceives in his music. What does he declare is all that he can get out of this old music? Describe the picture of Venice and its life which the music calls up. Is this picture of Venice true to the life at the time when Galuppi lived? (See "Venice: An Historical Sketch," by Horatio E. Brown, chap. xxii.)

Notice that the various modulations are made by the speaker to fit in with definite moods of the Venetian belles and beaux he is imaging. What is the general tenor of these moods, — thoughtless joyousness, or gayety with an undercurrent of fear? In stanza xi. the speaker makes a reflection upon the

fact that he thought he had wrung a secret from nature ; what does he mean by this ?

Possibly he means that whenever he tries to believe that there was some immortal element even in the frivolous life of Venice, Galuppi's cold music dissipates it all by speaking to him only of its decay and death. If that is true of Venice, why not of himself too ? The music does not comfort him with anything better than a sarcastic fling at his knowledge of physics and geology. Might a wider application of the thought be made here, namely, that soul is not revealed any more in present-day culture than it was in the frivolity of eighteenth-century Venice ? Is there any indication that the speaker finds the music of Galuppi beautiful ? What do we learn of the character of the speaker ? What seems to be the mood induced in the listener by Galuppi's music ? Do you suppose that Galuppi was in a dismal mood when he wrote it, or is its effect on the modern listener due solely to its old-fashioned quality ?

Mrs. Ireland, writing of this poem in the London Browning Society Papers, says :—

“ We feel assured that the *Toccata* treated of in Browning's poem must have possessed considerable light and shade, for while its joyous lightness conjured up before the listener's mind the bewildering vision of festal scenes in ancient Venice, while it drew around him the balmy night of May, the intoxicating fragrance of roses and love and youth, the atmosphere surcharged with fulness of sensuous life, there were yet thrilling and tender cadences, surely some strains that had a ‘dying fall,’ dissonances even, powerful enough to interpose, with obtrusiveness, grim doubts in the very heart and core of the charmed moment—

doubts transient, quickly put aside or stifled, but ghastly in their suggestion of impending change, doom, and death."

This opinion is based upon the supposition that the music is a direct reflection of the gay life of the time, with its underlying sense of decay, while from our previous study of the poem it would appear that the music does not reflect the life directly, but only through associations in the mind of the listener, who finds the *Toccata* anything but gay. He also implies that while the suspensions and diminished sevenths may have told them something, they did not tell him anything. These intervals when used by the more modern harmonic writers produce rich effects, but by the earlier polyphonic writers they were apt to be used in a sort of wooden and mechanical way.

In "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha" we get more of the present scene than in "A Toccata." Is this done by any direct descriptions, or by means of side remarks which the organist lets fall as he is struggling with the fugue? (For a sketch of fugue-form, see Notes, *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., p. 382.)

What do we learn of the scene of the poem in the first few stanzas? What is the organist bent on discovering in the fugue of this composer? What sort of a composition is this fugue, as described by Browning? Compare the description in the poem with the account of a fugue given in the Notes. What conclusion does the organist at first come to in regard to the fugue? Notice the comparison with the gilt roof of the church over which is stretched a spider's web. What moral of life suggests itself to him as a result of this comparison as to the moral possibly meant by the composer? This conclusion not being exactly com-

plimentary to the fugue, how does he counteract it in stanzas xxv. and xxvi.? Returning to the fugue, what does he declare finally in regard to the moral? What puts an end to his playing? Why does he turn from the fugue to Palestrina? Palestrina was the first to release music from the dry formalism into which it had fallen in the hands of the contrapuntal writers; it would, therefore, be a marked contrast to the fugue he had been playing and a relief to his feelings. It has been also proposed that Palestrina represents the noble music of the Church, which did not obscure the truth by its over-elaboration. Is this a good suggestion? Was over-elaboration a mark of secular music as opposed to that of the Church?

In these two poems is it the personality of the composer or that of the one playing and speaking which dominates the tone of the poem? What mental picture do you form of their characters?

In "Abt Vogler" we get an inside view of the creator of music, — not as in the other poems merely of an interpreter. The musician himself speaks, giving expression to the thoughts which have arisen in him as he extemporizes. What does Abt Vogler compare his music to in the first verse? What is the story of Solomon and his palace? (Dr. Berdoe says: "Jewish legend gave Solomon sovereignty over the demons, and a lordship over the powers of nature. In the Moslem East these fables have found a resting-place in much of its literature from the Koran onwards. Solomon was thought to have owed his power over the spiritual world to the possession of a seal on which the 'most great name of God was engraved.'") See Lane, "Arabian Nights," *Introd.*, note 21, and chapter i., note 15.)

What is Vogler's first desire in regard to the music? How does he enlarge in stanzas ii. and iii. on the idea that the keys are the slaves of his will? What special appropriateness is there in speaking of notes in music as "eager to do, and die"? What myths are there as to the raising of walls by music? (For a comparison of music with architecture, see "The Boundaries of Music and Poetry," by Ambros.) What visions does he seem to see as he rears his palace of sound? What contrast does he make between painting, poetry, and music, in stanza vi.? In stanza vii. he declares that music is a direct inspiration untrammelled by laws. Is the Abbé right about this, or is he carried away by his enthusiasm for his own art? When it is remembered that it took man four thousand odd years to find out that it was agreeable to sound three notes together in a chord, does it not seem somewhat exaggerated to call it "the flash of the will that can"? Would it be more profound and none the less wonderful to call it the long struggle of the "will that can." How does the Abbé illustrate his point here? What does he mean by calling a chord in music a star? (See explanation given in *Notes, Camberwell Browning*, p. 309.) Furthermore, it may be said that a chord in music is like a piece of polished stone which aids in the building of the art edifice, and the flash of the individual will does indeed come in as the good Abbé rears his palace of sound (viii.). Upon realizing that his palace of music is gone, Vogler falls into a train of reflection. He first asks what comfort it is to him that other palaces as fine may be reared again, for he clings to the idea of permanency, — what was, shall be. What does he give as his belief in regard to good and evil in stanzas

ix. and x. ? In xi., what attitude does he take in regard to the failures of life as compared with discords in music ?

A discord in music is an interval which must be resolved ; that is, followed by a concord. A piece of music, though it may begin with a discord, or, in technical language, a dissonance, must always end with a concord. Contrary to the impression given in the line, discords are not the enemies of harmony, but its staunch allies. They do not exist merely to make concords more prized ; they exist because they are beautiful in themselves and beautiful in relation to concords.

Upon what is the faith of the Abbé founded, reason or intuition ? " God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear." "'Tis we musicians know !" What is the mood expressed in the last stanza, and how does he illustrate it by means of musical symbolism ? (See Notes.)

In " Charles Avison" the poet himself undisguisedly has a little talk with the once well-known English musician. How does he introduce the subject ? Does it strike you as being a perfectly natural train of thought leading up to the subject, or does the transition from the introductory ruminations to the subject proper seem forced on account of the pun ? It has the advantage at least of giving us a mental picture of the poet at his window this cold March morning watching the black-cap, while his active mind flies from thought to thought, weaving this interesting and profoundly philosophical poem. Observe how his imagination plays about the thought of Avison's March as it did about the black-cap. At stanza iv. he comes down to solid fact, and gives a description of the March

in musical parlance. What other early musicians come to Browning's mind as a result of his thinking of Avison's March, and how does he give us a glimpse of the musical controversies of the day? (For further information on these, see under names of musicians mentioned in Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" and Naumann's "History of Music.") In stanza v. what musical problem presents itself to him when he compares Avison's "evidence" with his own feelings? In stanza vi. he tackles the solution of the problem. He starts with a premise that no truer truth is obtainable by man than comes of music, but before proving this, he goes on to show first what music cannot do. How does he attempt to define the soul, and what illustrative image does he use?

This digression on the nature of the soul leads up to, and emphasizes the point the poet wishes to make; namely, that music is more distinctively than any other art the one which gives form to the moods, hates, loves, joys, etc., of the soul, and her triumph would be complete if the forms in which music is cast had an element of permanence in them.

This truth of the soul, then, is the truth that music gives to man, is it not? What does he say is the hitch which balks her of full triumph? And how does music compare with the other arts in its power to give permanent expression to a feeling? While she "dredges" deeper than the other arts, she seems even less able than they to give a permanent form, as he shows by remarking upon the fact that the popularity of the old composer wanes as the new one comes into view. His mood changes at stanza ix. Instead of noting the ever-new invasion, he facetiously imagines himself re-enlivening Avison's old March with modern

musical appliances. Note the symbol he uses and his description of how he will change the march. At stanza x. he grows serious again, and tells Avison not to fear any such irreverent innovation. In stanza xi. he quiets his doubts with the decision that even if the soul seeks ever-new forms of expression in music, still what has once lived can never die (compare with Abt Vogler's "There shall never be one lost good," line 69). But what must we do in order to appreciate the great musicians of the past?

Yet, again, before rejoicing over this decision the voice of doubt must be listened to. The poet does not believe that past knowledge is all futile, that it was only ignorance instead of knowledge in the bud destined to blossom in time, yet he remembers that old beliefs and opinions have passed away to give place to new ones, just as old tunes have. How is he to reconcile this philosophical creed with what seem to be facts of experience? In stanza xiii. he attempts the reconciliation, which is to the effect that the underlying truth is permanent, but that the manifestations of the eternal verities whether in music or in beliefs are constantly enlarging so that the older ones grow out of date. Therefore he will rejoice; Avison's March may be old-fashioned in form, but the march motive will bear resetting. As a final little quip he imagines what would be the effect of carrying a tune backwards instead of forwards, and concludes that by doing this unsuspected beauties would be revealed in Avison's March.

He seems to feel this attitude as somewhat disloyal, and ends by calling up a certain period of English history especially marked by a progressive impulse, and *for which* he is loath to think there was not music

fitted for the occasion. He will do what he can now any way by celebrating it with a glorious "subject" (theme for a fugue) of Bach's, and Avison shall help, and he writes a poem in honor of the heroes of that day — those who took the first steps toward that "Federated England" he foresees in stanza xiv. line 388.

Queries for Debate. — Do you remember to have read in any other poet poems upon music which showed such intimate acquaintanceship with its technical aspects? Do you consider the use of these technical terms unfitted for poetry, or an example of the fact that the realms of poetry may so be enlarged by the poet who can use them poetically?

Is David in "Saul" allied with any of these musicians in his attitude toward music?

What is the attitude of the speaker in "Fifine at the Fair"? Is Schumann's "Carnival" used in this poem much as the "Toccata" is used? Should you say that the principal difference is that in the "Toccata" the picture suggested by the music is a realistic, historical one, and the picture suggested by the "Carnival" music to the man in "Fifine" grows from a realistic image of the Carnival at Venice to a philosophical vision of human society? (For musical allusions and suggestions, see notes to *Camberwell Browning* on "Saul," Vol. IV., p. 375; on "Fifine at the Fair," Vol. IX., p. 288. Also remarks on the musical poems in Introduction to these volumes.)

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — The Philosophy of Music Indicated.

Hints: — The question has often been discussed as to whether music is capable of giving any definite impression as to its meaning. In "A Toccata" the music seems to give to the listener a very definite idea

of the life of Venice. Is it because there is anything in the music corresponding exactly to the mood of the life at that time, or is it rather the historical sense of the listener who calls up the picture? He knows the life of the time when Galuppi lived, and when he hears the music, association of ideas causes him to see the picture. Is not the mood produced by the music, one of coldness and deadness, exactly the opposite of the brightness of Venetian life? It cannot be said, then, that the "Toccata" gives a definite picture of Venetian life, for it would have been powerless to produce it without the historic knowledge of Galuppi and his times possessed by the listener.

On the other hand, Schumann's "Carnival" mentioned in "Fifine" deliberately attempts to put into music definite impressions. Much modern programme music does the same thing, as well as much of Wagner's music. To a certain extent it seems to be successful, though a large proportion of the success is due to the fact that cues to the meaning of the music are given either by deliberate descriptions, in acting, or in the titling of the music. The closer the attempt is toward the imitation of purely physical sounds, such as the neighing of horses, the singing of birds, etc., the more successful it is. It is to be observed, however, that the man in "Fifine" very soon leaves the concrete picture of Pantalón and Columbine, and through association, his historical sense, and his philosophizing predilections is led far afield by the music of Schumann.

In "Saul," again, the music of David has the desired effect upon Saul through association of ideas.

Has the organist in "Master Hugues" the same historical sense as the listener in "A Toccata"?

Or does he try to draw a meaning directly from the fugue? Does he in the end catch any intent of the composer, or does he merely attach a meaning to it from the outside, — a meaning, too, which is suggested entirely by the external form of the fugue, and not at all by its soul? Would a composition like this fugue be necessarily possessed of any soul? When contrapuntal writing was at its height, music was often so much a matter of rules and calculations that, instead of being the expression of the soul, it was merely an external and mechanical arrangement of sounds.

Observe, then, that in these poems the hearer gets out of the music very much what he puts into it himself. If he have a vivid imagination backed up by sufficient knowledge, he can see historical pictures or visions of the whole of human society. If he be of a moralizing turn of mind, he can extract a moral where none was intended. The question is whether any of these attitudes toward music indicate a truly musical appreciation of music.

Now let us see what Vogler feels about it. In "Abt Vogler" we do not have the effect of music on the listener, but its effect on its creator. Notice that Vogler does not attempt to express a definite meaning through his music, nor to find one afterwards. The comparisons he uses are all with the external form of music. What he builds is a beautiful palace of sound; the external manifestation of the wish of his soul to reach toward heaven.

By means of the wondrous beauty of his creation, earth and heaven seem to touch, and he sees visions. Not that the music in itself gives definite pictures of visions, but that the soul is so exalted by the beauty of his music that it induces a mood for visions. The

beauty and the evanescence of the music suggest two trains of philosophical thought: first, that any attainment which reaches out toward beauty and truth is a part of absolute beauty and truth, and is therefore eternal; second, that the failure to attain the perfect ideal of beauty and truth is in itself a proof that the perfect ideal will one day be realized; further, that all pain and evil is transitional, that its existence for a time is in order to add greater value to the joy which is to follow.

The Abbé's passion of soul is transformed into beauty in musical form; through that musical beauty would be reflected a mood of aspiration, but nothing more definite to one who could appreciate it in a true musical spirit. (For music as a suggester of moods, see "The Boundaries of Music and Poetry," by Ambros.) The trains of thought suggested are not such as would be deduced from any special musical composition, but grow from the analogies that may be drawn between the facts peculiar to musical extemporization and musical form and life; namely, evanescence, suggestive of the passing of all things; beauty, which in its recognition gives a sense of the absolute; contrast between discords and concords, which suggests the contrast between good and evil; and the harmony resulting from the admixture of discords with concords, suggesting that a completed view of life will show as great a harmony between good and evil. Notice once more that these thoughts of the Abbé are not the inspiration of the music, but follow as analogies after the music is finished. The sole inspiration of the music is his mood of aspiration.

When we come to "Charles Avison," we find *that the poet considers music to be the expression in*

artistic form of the moods of the soul, of which Abt Vogler is the living example. There is no question of its expressing anything more definite and concrete; the problem with him being, Why, since it does express these most fundamental and abstract truths, should it lose its power, as time passes, for making a direct emotional appeal to the listener? He is obliged to come to the conclusion that musical expression is relative, like all human expression. It is ever trying fully to reveal the soul, but is hampered by man's finiteness, yet, owing to this very lack, progress toward new forms is possible. "Autumn comes, So much the better," which compares well with Abt Vogler's "What is our failure here but a triumph's evidence of the fulness of the days?" What hope is there for the music that is dead and gone? It can only be made to speak again to us by the use of just such historical and imaginative methods as those used by the man in "A Toccata."

It has been suggested by Mr. Moseley, in Proceedings of the London Browning Society, that Browning, Wagner, and Schopenhauer's views are identical. He says: —

"Schopenhauer says it stands apart from all other arts in that it is not an imitation or reproduction of an Idea of the things in the world, but Speech of our deepest innermost self. Whilst the other arts objectivate the Will under mediation only, *i. e.* by means of Ideas, music is the *immediate* objectivation and image of the universal Will. It is by no means an *image* of the *Ideas* as the other arts are, but an *Image* of the Will itself: its effect so much more powerful and penetrating than that of other arts: for these speak of shadows only, whilst *it* speaks of *essentials*.

“Wagner says : ‘The essence of music is this, that which all other arts only indicate, through it and in it becomes unquestionable certainty, absolute and unequivocal truth’ (v. 247).

“Melody tells the hidden story of the will in the light of consciousness ; paints each emotion, each endeavor, each movement, all that reason gathers together under the wide and negative conception of feeling, and which it can no longer grasp as abstractions. Therefore also it has always been said that music is the speech of feeling and of passion, as language is of reason. The invention of melody, the exposition of all the deepest secrets of human desires and feelings, is the work of genius, whose work is here, more obviously than elsewhere, free from all reflection and conscious purpose, and may be called inspiration. The composer reveals the innermost essential being of the world, and expresses the profoundest wisdom in a language his reason does not understand ; as a magnetic somnambulist gives account of things of which she has no notion when awake.

“What is the meaning of Abt Vogler, xii. ? Schopenhauer will explain : —

“‘The essential nature of man consists in this, that his Will strives, is satisfied and strives again, and so on for ever, nay that happiness and wellbeing consist of this only, that the transition from wish to satisfaction and from satisfaction to a new wish should go on rapidly, as the failing of satisfaction produces suffering just as the absence of a new wish produces longing. Thus, in accordance with this, the essentials of melody consist in a continuous deviation, swerving from the key-note in a thousand ways, not only to the nearest harmonic notes, to the third or dominant,

but to every tone, to the dissonant seventh, and to augmented intervals; yet followed, in the end, by a return to the starting-point: in all these ways melody expresses the manifold strivings of the Will; whilst by the final return to some harmonic note, or more definitely, by a return to the key-note, its *satisfaction* is expressed.' "

From what has preceded, should you say that the opinions of the three are identical, or that Browning's includes and goes beyond all because he recognizes music's limitations? Does the man in "Fifine" differ from the poet in his musical philosophy except in the mode of his expression?

Queries for Discussion.—Do you think it true that all music reflects the moods of the soul? Could it be said of merely imitative music?

Is there not also much music which seems to be put together from the outside rather than from the inside, and not necessarily poor music, but music with something of the artistic quality of arabesque patterns?

Does Browning anywhere state that all music is a reflection of soul-moods, or does he only contend that the power to do this is music's greatest achievement?

Does he not insist too strongly upon the ephemeral nature of musical expression? Has not experience proved that whenever the high-water mark of musical expression has been reached, it has survived in great musical works of art? (For example, Handel's Oratorios, Beethoven's Symphonies.)

Is Browning's philosophy of music further borne out by the fact that these poems may be regarded as types of various phases of musical development? (See remarks on musical poems in Introduction to these

volumes; also Naumann's "History of Music" and Ritter's "History of Music" for accounts of musical development.)

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.* — Rhythm, Metre, and Ornament.

Hints: — "A Toccata" has eight stresses to the line, made up of seven trochaic feet with an extra stressed syllable at the end. The stanzas are of three lines, all rhyming together. Do you discover any variations from the normal line? On the whole, the form is monotonous, is it not? and well reproduces the monotony of the old Toccata. But upon this monotonous rhythm are embroidered so many lively thoughts, that the effect is a combination of gayness with an undercurrent of dulness exactly suited to the subject of the poem. The musical allusions have already been considered in relation to the subject-matter. Are there any allusions introduced merely for ornament? How about other forms of poetical ornamentation, — similes, metaphors, symbols? Are there many of them?

"Master Hugues" shows a little more variety in the construction of the stanza, — two lines with three stresses, two with four, and a last one with three; rhymes alternating, the last line rhyming with the first and third lines. The normal foot of the verse is a dactyl, but every line has an extra stressed syllable, and sometimes an extra unstressed one after the stressed one.

Observe all these little variations, also the nature of the rhymes, the double ones often being very ingenious. These rhymes have been found fault with for their uncouthness, but when you examine them, *do you not find* that they are mostly easy and natural,

and very well reflect the growing excitement of the organist as he gets deeper and deeper into the difficulties of the fugue? The close of the struggle with the fugue is marked by what change in the form? There are one or two elaborate comparisons in this poem; what are they, and which has the most intrinsic poetic beauty? Is the poem, on the whole, more figurative and more allusional in its language than the preceding poem?

It would be difficult to find a greater contrast in language than that between the two poems already spoken of and "Abt Vogler." Point out the reasons for this contrast, noticing the far greater richness of the imagery, the wider and more exalted range of thought, the smooth and harmonious flow of the language, depending largely upon alliteration. The construction of stanza and line is simple, — six stresses, with one and sometimes two unstressed syllables following, giving what Mr. Beatty calls iambic-logacædic metre; then a final stressed syllable.

There has been a good deal of talk as to the meaning of the line (52) "That out of three sounds he frame not a fourth sound, but a star." See explanation suggested in the Notes to *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., p. 309. The whole phrase may be taken also as a symbol of the distinctive character of musical art as compared with other arts. Painting, for example, imitates the harmonies of color found in nature, but musical harmonies seem to be the result of human invention entirely, which first chooses out certain sounds and then chooses to combine them in stars of sound. This is still true artistically, although science has discovered that, with the exception of the minor third, the fundamental intervals used in music are

found combined in nature as partial vibrations (called overtones) of any vibrating body sounding a given note. The Abbé was, of course, not aware of this modern scientific discovery. With regard to the musical allusions in this poem, are they used quite in the same way as they are in the others? or do the different attitudes in the three poems necessarily result in a different use of the allusions?

The chief interest in the form in "Charles Avison" is in the variety of grouping in the rhymes. The metre is that of blank verse, iambic pentameter. Another thing to be noticed is the way in which the lines run on, line after line. How many end-stopped lines are there in this poem of 433 lines? In spite of the fact that the sentences are mostly very long, the meaning is not difficult on that account, is it? Which do you consider the most difficult passages, and why? And which do you consider the most beautiful passages, and why? Although this poem is so long and argumentative, do you not find the interest kept up all through by the changes in mood? For example, first, the poet's observation of the black-cap; second, his imagination rushing off at the thought of the march; third, the prosaic description of the march; fourth, the pondering over the problem; fifth, philosophizing, first upon the soul, then upon the provinces of the arts; sixth, an outbreak of humor, wherein he tries to reinstate Avison; seventh, more philosophy, in which his optimistic theories struggle somewhat with the data of experience; eighth, a triumphant mood; ninth, another attempt to prove the worth of Avison's March by showing how much it was ahead of Elizabethan plain-song; and, finally, triumph once more. Loath to think England's heroes

of the past did not have good music, he will make it all right any way by cheering them now with music to his choice, and, loyal to Avison, will let him help. Perhaps it would not be stretching too much of a point to compare this poem to a musical composition with several themes that recur at different intervals, one soaring and imaginative, one questioning and philosophical, one light and humorous, one triumphant. Would it give the poem needed artistic unity to think of it in this way? Is there any passage in the poem which would give direct credence to this idea?

Queries for Discussion.—What reasons can you think of which cause Browning always to dwell upon instrumental rather than vocal music? Is it another sign of his originality in the treatment of the subject?

Should you say that his musical poems prove that the poet was haunted by the fact of music's evanescent power?

Do you suppose this feeling of his was enhanced by the Wagner craze and the talk about the music of the future which has agitated the musical world for so many years?

Is this talk dying out, and a recognition of the greatness of each musical age for its own special qualities taking its place?

The poet's evident wish that there should not be one lost good in music indicates that he would have hailed the sane attitude of the present, does it not?

THE POET

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Compare Aprile in "Paracelsus," part ii., vol. i. 82, 309; "Sordello," ii. 93, 309; Ronsard and Marot in "The Glove," iv. 162, 185; passages in "The Ring and the Book," parts i. lines 410-470, 712-779, 1348-1365, xii. 835 foll.; "Two Poets of Croisic," lines 1210-1280, x. 235, 306; "Parleying with Christopher Smart," xii. 101, 330. ["Sordello" and "Smart" belong as wholes under this subject, but they are taken up later in "Single Poem Studies," which may be combined at pleasure with this programme, or excluded from it on account of their length and subtlety.] On the poet considered as a writer of dramas, see "Aristophanes' Apology;" and on Browning with reference to himself as poet, see "Pacchiarotto" and Epilogue, and "Pambo," ix. 171, 294, and xi. 286, 337.

Consult, also, Browning's Essay on Shelley given in *Camberwell Browning*, vol. xii. p. 383.

I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
— The Poet-Nature.

Hints: — The inner nature of a poet is Browning's earliest subject-matter. It is evidence of his genuineness as a budding artist intending to model human life dramatically, that the theme he started out with, at twenty years of age, was one he really knew.

The way in which he presented the poet nature in "Pauline" is shapeless, and the sequence of experiences and confidences is confused (for digest, see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, as cited above, and Introduction, pp. xxxix–xliv); but the characteristic traits of this poet's nature are clear: a central over-consciousness, capable, with development, not only of looking on at its own qualities and processes, but of disposing them at will; and an insatiable thirst for knowledge and experience of all sorts. The main powers and habits of his mind are almost equally clear: a vitalizing imagination; a trust in his own close relation to a higher power. The lack of development in the exercise of this central consciousness is evident in the planlessness of its expression. The way in which this insatiable thirst led to dissipation in sensation, and to action and thought having reference to self alone, so that a state of lovelessness and godlessness followed, is almost a necessary result of the natural play of a nature born with such characteristics. But its deliverance is almost equally a foregone conclusion; and although the process of self-deliverance is indistinctly presented in the poem, the material from which it may be collected is supplied. The underlying confidence in the higher power of God — obscured by the enjoyment of personal desires which made self a centre, instead of God, or instead of any other object of love not subordinate to self —

is finally restored by consciousness itself. The self, become conscious of weakness and mortality, is led to a sense of the comfort of Pauline's love, and thence to the old need of an infinite love. All the story this poem has consists in this restoration of the self to its primal need. The rest of "Pauline" furnishes nothing else that throws light on the poet-nature, beyond lovely example after example of the gift of vivid, beauty-bestowing imagination, except for the light thrown upon one other similar reconciliation of a power of the poet-nature inconsistent in its exercise with that nature itself. This power is its craving for all knowledge, a craving inconsistent with the craving for appropriating to itself all passion. The necessity of accommodating these two to each other awakens his will to use the one for the sake of the other. But in choosing between giving the rein to reason or to love, he is again and often lost in difficulty, and so throughout "Pauline" we have the oscillations of a nature beginning to be aware of itself and trying to put its elements into coherent relation, but with failure or half-success.

In comparison with this self-centred, self-aggrandizing poet-nature, the nature of Aprile, the poet of "Paracelsus," is strong in an equally innate desire for the out-flowing of self. But in the exercise of his desire to love infinitely and be loved, Aprile fails also. His intuitional insight and sympathy were so comprehensive that the ready and serviceable means to express them were missed or spurned by a will as much too widely impassioned and reckless of control as that of the poet of "Pauline" was too self-centred and adroit. The inborn tendency of the one poet-nature to appropriate to itself all beauty of knowledge and feeling is in Aprile a contrary ten-

dency to dower all men with the beauty their own natures but dimly guess, and in so doing to gain his reward, their love or that of the Infinite Love.

Browning followed up these two first sketches of supplementary poet-natures, by showing, in "Sordello," how still another variety of the poet-nature, starting out in life with as passionate a yearning as Aprile's to spend itself in outgoing desire, and as self-centred a motive in enjoying it as that of the poet of "Pauline," is tutored, by contact with social life, and through accommodating, in the practical exercise of his art, his gifts and desires with the difficulties encountered, to learn something, finally, of the mastery belonging to the centralized consciousness and self-control of the poet of "Pauline," and something of the social love belonging to Aprile's wide sympathy with humanity.

In Sordello's case, however, it would seem that it was never a mere yearning of love for mankind, like Aprile's, although he came to feel that, which instigated him to poetic creation, but the gratification of an insuppressible will. In this respect his nature is more akin to that of the poet of "Pauline," whose initial impulse found its basis in self.

Eglamor, the minor poet of "Sordello," was of still another type, of less exalted gifts than any of these his brother poets, being merely the lowly yet loyal slave of song, shaped by art, as it were, instead of aspiring to shape it. Although Aprile may be linked with Eglamor in his desire to spend himself in outflow, he is distinguished from him by the dramatic bent of his genius. And though Eglamor may have attained a greater measure of success than either Aprile or the poet of "Pauline," theirs were failures of a

pioneer sort, their schemes being ahead of their accomplishment. They were both failures through complexity of power, while Eglamor, being merely a faithful imitative workman, had no such complexities of desires to satisfy.

Browning's Essay on Shelley (see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XII., p. 383), after distinctly defining the two great classes of poet-nature, ordinarily called objective and subjective, — the one as reproducing things external, either scenic or human, with reference to men; the other as embodying his own perceptions, "not so much with reference to the many below as the One above" — calls attention to the fact that there is "not so much essential distinction in the faculty of the two poets, . . . as in the . . . adaptability" of the objects used by either to the "distinct purpose of each." The poet whose study is himself with reference to the absolute intelligence and whose usual material is Idea and Nature, and the poet whose study is the doings of men and whose usual material is human action and effect, may interchange material and keep their distinct purpose and mode of working. Moreover, the two modes of working might be followed successively by the same poet in perfection; or there might be "a mere running in of the one faculty upon the other . . . the ordinary circumstance."

Has Browning shown in the poet of "Pauline" a poet with mixed gifts, — his self-centred consciousness being a gift adapting him to the work of the dramatic poet, who is able to externalize his material so that it may appeal to the aggregate understanding of men; his yearning towards a God rather than towards human love being a gift of spiritual perception adapt-

ing him to the work of the subjective poet, whose attempt is the embodiment of absolute truth, "not what man sees, but what God sees"? May such a confusion of gifts, although differently commingled, which he also was not strong enough to master, have been meant to characterize Aprile? Both would then represent types of the poet-nature sketched as in the process of evolution; while in *Sordello* a full-length portrait of a poet-nature, dowered distinctively with the will to create, seems to be presented as having the capability to pass through successive stages of development, both as to faculty and purpose.

The references to Shelley in "Pauline" forbid the supposition that Shelley is portrayed in the poet of "Pauline." What sort of poet-nature is presented, and can you find any actual poet whom the description fits? If there is a likeness to Shelley which comes out in the evidently strong influence of Shelley upon him, in what does it consist? Notice the essential difference, — his distinctive self-consciousness which Shelley as distinctively lacked? Would Keats or the young Browning (not the ripe Browning) suit the character? Say why?

For suggestions as to signs of Browning's sympathy with Shelley, see Florence Converse's "Shelley's Influence on Browning" (*Poet-love*, Vol. VII., pp. 18-28, January, 1895).

The poet-nature is not directly treated in "Memorabilia." It comes out, in that bit of homage to Shelley, only in the guise of the sense of inner eventfulness the poet-nature has the power to stir so deeply.

In "Popularity," also, Keats is not directly praised, but is made an instance of the originality peculiar to the rare and distinctive poet-nature which gives its work

so new and fresh a quality. So primitive and close to nature is it, that it is at first misunderstood and despised, and afterwards slavishly imitated, not merely by gentle and kindly Eglamors, but by grossly commercial Nokeses and Stokeses, who reap the reward Keats died without.

The poet who poetizes general truths bare of illusion is the subject of "Transcendentalism." His way of separating principles from their embodiment is compared with the metaphysical way of looking at life, by a brother-poet whose claim for any poet is that he ought to be like the magician, charming men with convincing apparitions of life; instead of like the theologian, drawing abstractions from it. True in practice to his theory of the poet, this brother-poet sees a poem in the poet whose theory he criticises. And this poem is made, by Browning himself, in accordance with the same principle of poetic art. In place of launching out upon abstract principles, he presents a picture of two poets conferring together, thus embodying vividly two different views of poetic art.

But how do you think this poem should be understood? Is it "a genuine piece of criticism," as Mrs. Orr declares; or is it intended by Browning as an answer to his critics, as Dr. Berdoo thinks probable, who says: "It has been said of Mr. Browning's poetry by a hundred competent writers that he does not sing, but philosophizes instead; that he gives the world his naked thoughts, his analyses of souls not draped in the beauty of the poet's art, but in the form of 'stark-naked thought.'" There is no objection, says his interviewer, if he will but cast aside the harp which *he does not play but only tunes and adjusts, and*

speak his prose to Europe through 'the six-foot Swiss tube which helps the hunter's voice from Alp to Alp.' The fault is, that he utters thoughts to men thinking they care little for form or melody, as boys do. It is quite otherwise he should interpret nature — which is full of mystery — to the soul of man: as Jacob Boehme heard the plants speak, and told men what they said; or as John of Halberstadt, the magician, who by his will-power could create the flowers Boehme thought about. The true poet is a poem himself, whatever be his utterance."

Is it a critic — an interviewer, as Dr. Berdoo explains, or a "brother-poet," as Browning says — who speaks in this poem? Is there a discrimination made between the way he should interpret Nature and Thought? And is no discrimination made between Jacob Boehme's and John of Halberstadt's methods as symbols of different poetic methods? Why, then, are these methods introduced and contrasted? Are both considered equally good, in the poem, as poetic methods? And is the gist of "Transcendentalism," therefore, that the manner of the utterance is unimportant, because "the true poet is a poem whatever be his utterance?" Or is it not rather that the manner of utterance is important; and that although the author writing out his bare thoughts may himself be a poem, the poem he writes is "naught"?

Should the poem be interpreted symbolically, as suggested in *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., p. 281, or taken literally, as Browning's apology to his critics? If the latter, what does the apology amount to as a defence?

The speaker of "How it Strikes a Contemporary" is an idler of the poet's own town and time, whose

conception of the poet-nature is colored by his point of view. He misunderstands it, and falls far short of appreciating its value, and yet he has a lurking suspicion of this man's mysterious importance, though naturally he construes this to be importance to the King, as a spy, instead of importance to a higher power whence the poetic gift that marks him from other men is derived. His townsman is himself finally led to suggest this, as if he saw through his own comparison, at the end of the poem, in his talk about the poet's death. How far can the account given of the poet's life and habits by the townsman be trusted? Is his observation of facts, for instance, as to what the poet looked at in the street, etc., to be depended upon, but his interpretation of them to be taken with a grain of salt? How much allowance must be made for Browning's humorous treatment of the theme? What sort of nature does his contemporary's account of him lead you to suppose the poet had? To what class of poet-nature did he belong? Was he a poet of nature, a subjective poet, or a dramatist? Why must he have been whatever you think the poem authorizes you to conclude, and not a poet of either of the other two sorts?

"At the 'Mermaid,' " "House," and "Shop" are a group of poems in which Browning had the poet-nature of Shakespeare more or less directly in mind. They appear to have been called out by opposition to the theories of Shakespeare's personality uppermost at about the time they were written, but which are now, a decade after Browning's death, undergoing considerable modification in general consonance with Browning's view. (See particularly Sidney Lee's "Shakespeare," as opposed to Tyler's "Sonnets of

Shakespeare." For digests of the poems, see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IX., p. 298.) These theories might be briefly stated thus : (1) that Shakespeare's life may be discovered in his work, and that cynicism toward life and especially toward women are revealed in it ; (2) that the Sonnets are autobiographical in detailed and literal ways ; (3) that money was his main object in writing, and his care for becoming a gentleman of landed estate with tithes to collect and law-suits on hand, the sufficient explanation of his career. The three poems successively take up some phase of these three suppositions.

In "At the 'Mermaid'" a scene is presented in which Shakespeare is speaking in the midst of a circle of his sherris-drinking contemporaries, frequenters of the "Mermaid" tavern. He refers to the partisan quarrels and rival ambitions seething about him in which he is vainly tempted to take an active part ; claiming for himself excuse both from the honors and the entanglements in which they would involve him. Browning makes him refer especially to the post of chief poet and the price that has to be paid for it, — homage to grandees and squabbles with rivals, — in contrast with the life full of zest he lives aloof from cynicism either as to Love, Fortune, or Fame.

"House" is less directly applicable to Shakespeare ; but, beneath the symbol used of a house open to a gaping public, and his own refusal to make his privacy open to any but the spirit-sense in sonnet-singing, the reference to investigations of Shakespeare's Sonnets for particulars of his private life is obvious. The tenth stanza emphasizes this. The exclamation "Hoity toity," etc., and the reminder that Shakespeare did what the speaker refuses to do, is put, dra-

matically, in the mouths of such investigators. On the rejoinder, which questions it, — as much as to say, I, for one, do not accept this statement of yours, — declaring, on the contrary, that it is inconsistent with Shakespeare's character, is based a divination of what that poet's nature really was; that is, so supremely dramatic in his plays that he himself must have had the soul corresponding to the dramatic bent.

"Shop" makes no reference to Shakespeare, but is a supplementary poem to "House," bringing up a companion symbol of a shop in which the whole life of the shop-keeper is swallowed up. It is a vivid way of showing by an analogy what the theory of a man like Shakespeare, having no glimpse beyond material success in his work, would make him out to be. Browning's own way of dealing with the fact that Shakespeare worked to meet the theatrical market, etc., may be inferred from the closing stanzas carrying on the parable (lines 90-110). Because we know nothing certainly of any inner life after his retirement, which took place while not yet an old man, it does not in the least follow that there was none. Not external facts that there was any such life prove it, but the poet-nature of the man does. "Ask himself!" (See line 91.) It is inconsistent with his poet-nature to suppose "all his music" to be "money chink." Because he had to look out for material success, and did so, does it therefore follow that there were no thoughts, fancies, loves, "except what trade can give"? (See stanza xx.) Again, in the last two stanzas, under the veil of the symbol of shop-keeping, Browning, for one, declares this theory of Shakespeare *most unlikely and unnatural*, and he asserts, on the

contrary, his protest against such absorption of the soul in the means of living that there was no life, beside, in so strong a way that the opposite idea is intimated. (For further hints on Browning's implications concerning Shakespeare in these poems, see "Browning's Tribute to Shakespeare," *Poet-lore*, Vol. III., pp. 216-221, April, 1891.)

How does "The Names" compare with these poems in presenting a view of Shakespeare's nature? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XII., Notes, for explanation of the figure used as to names.) What do you think of the sonnet as praise? Could it be higher? Is it characteristic of Browning, that his Sonnet in honor of Shakespeare does not draw out of him so graphic a picture of the great dramatist's nature as these symbolic poems?

Browning explained in his Album Lines (*Camberwell Browning*, Vol. XII., p. 273) that he was thinking of Dante when he wrote "Touch him ne'er so lightly," and of other such great national poets. How does the poem suit this explanation? Notice that the first stanza is a speech from the mouth of some critic whose attitude Browning represents as assuming to be all-sufficient upon his subject. That subject is the poet-soul, which he expounds to be an easy-singing nature, blooming without inward struggle, like a flower. This view the poet, apparently, as interlocutor, combats skeptically in the second stanza, in much the same manner as he questioned the view of Shakespeare's soul held by some critics as if it were perfectly known and understood. This he does merely by his doubting "Indeed?" as if his recollection glanced at once to historic examples of a contrary fact, where hard conditions and all kinds of weather, good and bad,

slowly bred not so much the flowers of poetry and easy recognition, but the tenacious tree, quietly growing, which proves to be the heritage of more than one generation. Observe the indirect implication that the critic's description does indeed apply to the lesser though not to the greater poet-nature. How true is the picture drawn in the second stanza to Dante? Compare the lines to Dante in "Sordello," Book I, lines 348-372.

In his Sonnet on Goldoni one of these slighter poet-natures is praised. How is this done? Is any incapacity shown to appreciate the Venetian comedian's lighter form of genius, because of his emphasis in the Epilogue on the enduring importance to the world of a weightier kind of poet, like Dante?

What conclusions may be drawn from the fact that many of Browning's portraits of poets have reference to actual historic poets? How many are imaginative? And how many are partly historical or typical?

Queries for Discussion. — Is there reason to suppose that Cervantes stood for the portrait of the poet-nature drawn in "How it Strikes a Contemporary"? or is it better to suppose it stands for any typically dramatic poet?

Is Browning's conception of Shakespeare in "At the 'Mermaid'" a proof of his correct insight? Is his opposition in "House" to the autobiographical theory of Shakespeare's Sonnets justifiable?

Do Browning's portrayals of the poet reveal his predilection for originality in poetry, as opposed to imitative and technical excellence, and for the dramatic or vividly objective modes of poetical work, instead of the pictorial or didactic and generalizing? If so, does this revelation of his sympathies show that his

own poetry did, in his judgment, belong to this objective class of work ; or that he had no knowledge of himself ?

How does Browning's treatment of the poet in these poems compare with that of his contemporaries, — Tennyson's, for example, in "The Poet," "The Poet's Mind," "Lucretius," "To Victor Hugo," "To Dante," "To Virgil," "The Dead Prophet" ?

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Discussion.* — The Poet and the World.

Hints : — In which of the poems cited in this series is the poet's relation with the world brought out ?

In "Pauline," the beautiful imagery (lines 151-205) which is employed to picture what Shelley was to the young poet and what he finds him to be to the world, at first neglectful of him, is almost the only flattering reference to the general public the young poet's confidences to "Pauline" afford. "World's influence" upon himself (see lines 349-354) was deemed so deteriorating that only loneliness could cure him after it. Shelley, and a world of choice spirits, select, and known to him in books, are really, except for Pauline, his links of sympathy with the outside world ; but these he does not account as "real life," and although the enthusiasm for that which he has received from Shelley, and the plan to help men which he has derived from Plato, determine his "plan to look on real life, the life all new" to him (lines 441-464), he is not only disappointed and disillusionized with the world when he does try to know something of it, but content to have it so, since his own powers are strengthened by the experience. Even the influence of the select souls of poets over men begins to seem vain ; and his only comfort is

in his own homage to them (529-569 and 690-697), and to England, clung to somewhat desperately and almost as a conventional form or mere mental habit. Pauline's suggestion that "a perfect bard was one who chronicled the stages of all life" (883) embodies the most luminous conception of the world as related to the poet which the poem contains, and the most hopeful to the young poet, for it helps him out of his maze and urges him to tell at least his own story as an example of one stage of life, which may, indeed, as he divines (1009-1021), open up to him the beauty and validity of other stages of life.

Aprile's first word, on the other hand, is of the God-given office of the poet to the world, and his beautiful song in "Paracelsus," Book II., lines 281-339, is an anguished lament over the unexerted powers of dead poets who left the world they were to loosen, bound. Nor has he an altogether vague conception of what the poet may do to fulfil his office in saying better than he for the "lowest hind" "his own heart's language."

But in "Sordello" the poet who created Aprile has taken a long step onward in social experience when he sets out to show not merely the value of the poet to the world, but of the world to the poet. (See the brief general digest of "Sordello," *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. II., pp. 309 and 310; also the Introduction, pp. vii-x.)

How do "Memorabilia" and "Popularity" illustrate the poet's relation with the world? Are they indicative, like "Sordello," of a treatment of the poet by Browning from a more sophisticated point of view, because they place in contrast the sympathetic and the unsympathetic relation of a poet with the pub-

lic? This comes out in "Memorabilia," through the speaker's keen sense of the unusual and significant in merely once seeing and speaking with Shelley, and through the indifference of the person who did see him and speak to him. How does this little poem in its first two stanzas alone and through the mouth of but one speaker manage to give you such an impression of the poet in his relation to these two persons? Are the seventh and eighth lines the most tell-tale in giving the two points of view? Notice in what dazzlingly high relief the inner eventfulness of Shelley to the speaker is put by the simile of the moors and the feather in the other two stanzas.

In "Popularity" the contrast between public sympathy and indifference to spiritual originality in a poet is drawn by presenting the effect of his new quality on the one man who when he saw him knew him and named him a star, man's "star, God's glow-worm" (lines 4-6), and who, foreseeing the increasing homage his poetry will win in the future, attempts to draw him as he stands, in the present, with few or none noticing him or marvelling over the spoils his skill has brought to land out of the great deep (lines 21-25). Then this contrast between public sympathy and indifference is made still stronger by bringing into the picture a third and a fourth class of public opinion: the third is represented by the bystander who could criticise and quote tradition on classic examples of just the sort of artistic result this poet has rediscovered the native material for (lines 31-40); and the fourth is represented by the train of imitators who catch up some dilution of this rediscovered poetic material, and thrive on the use of that for which the poet received no such reward. These two classes of

the public show not indifference, but stupidity in their relation to the poet and his work. They lack the alertness of understanding to appreciate the poet promptly, but neither the knowledge that might have helped them to be wiser, nor the ready talent and merely technical dexterity that enable them to get some good for themselves out of the master-poet's original toil. Observe, too, that a special touch is given each one of the train of imitators, who show both their nature and the momentum of Keats's fame in the fact that Hobbs only "hints" blue very conservatively, while Nobbs "prints" it venturously, and Nokes and Stokes compete with each other in rashly "azure feats."

The relation of the poet to the world illustrated in "Transcendentalism" amounts to the assertion of a general poetic principle. If the poem is to be taken as genuine in its critical import, it implies that imagery or symbolism, the "draping of naked thoughts in sights and sounds," is the essential difference between poetry and prose; and that this is what the developed mind, that is, the reader whose intellectual and æsthetic sensibility is really cultured and mature, desires above all else in poetry. Notice that the supposition that boys seek for images and melody, and men for reason, in poetry is put in the mouth of the boy-poet; and that a deepening of the import of his argument is the turn the other poet gives this in his rejoinder. It is "quite otherwise," says he. In youth objects do not strike us as wonderful, we take them for granted, and only concern ourselves about their hidden meaning; but when we know more of life, we prize life itself and hail every evidence of its power and beauty. Is this not true of mankind in general as well as of individuals;

the early concern of races, in their infancy, being to attach supernatural doctrines and unreal origins to natural objects, which later in intellectual development the mind of man has been content to observe and investigate for their own sake, recognizing in these objects themselves their native vitality and beauty? This suggests, perhaps, not only that science is a later growth than theology, but also that realism in the sense of interest in real life is a later product in literature — including poetry — than romanticism in the sense of unreal or impossible life. If the poet's strongest and closest relation with his public consists, then, in his presentation of life to that public, does it not also reveal the supplementary general poetic principle that the poet must depend upon objective life to convey to his public thoughts and reason? In other words, does it follow, because poetry must make use of objects, that it shall not transcend the objective and give forth spiritual truths by means of them? Or what is the trend of "Transcendentalism"? Does the interrupting poet object to the boy poet because he thinks he ought not to introduce thoughts or reason in poetry, or only because his method of introducing them is not an effective and wise one, is not an artistic method?

Neither the sophisticated man who is amused at another's starting when he hears this favored one has actually met Shelley, as in "Memorabilia;" nor the appreciative man in "Popularity," who recognizes a Keats as soon as he sees him; nor dull scholars who know all about the classics but never could get any inspiration out of Lemprière's Dictionary or their own sense of beauty, as Keats did; nor yet clever minor poets who took their cue from the new poet;

nor the brother-poet who cautions an ardent boy in his poetic attempts, as in "Transcendentalism;" but quite a different sort of member of the general public is presented with relation to a poet in "How it Strikes a Contemporary." How would you describe him from the clues the poem gives? Would you take him to be familiar with any book at all? It seems to be more than he would do to glance "with half an eye" at the books on the stall in the street, the fly-leaf ballads, or the "broad-edge bold-print posters on the wall," the notice of which by the poet he is talking about is among his proofs of the cognizance the strange fellow took "of men and things." And what conclusions do you draw of him from the other ways in which he, who could never write a verse, describes the only poet he ever knew in his life? How does he describe this poet's clothes, and notice what he lets fall about his own; his breathing himself on the promenade at the unfashionable hour, his "bloodlessness," and the fact that he found "no truth in one report," since the "poor man" lived "quite another kind of life," etc.? Does this young Spanish dandy describe himself more unmistakably than he describes the poet? Is he not an example of the vague and mysterious effect a poet of widespread fame might have on a gay and credulous unlettered young man about town?

In the Shakespearian group of poems the poet exposes the envy and ready suspicions of evil born of a facility in persons generally for judging the most different personality by themselves, which makes them love to blur a shining mark, unable to understand its distinction and grudging to yield it the advantage of its own nature over theirs.

“At the ‘Mermaid,’” in particular, brings out more directly than the preceding poems the inner portrait of the central figure, the poet himself, — Shakespeare. As Browning conceives him, what sort of a man is he in his relation with the world? Notice the light opinion he has of the insight of the good fellows about him (lines 9-12). He is not likely to open his heart expansively to the roomful (see stanza v.). He is alive to the weaknesses of humanity, and keenly aware of the unlovely itch it has to find that the bard is weak and human too (as if that were at all strange!), and he declares, therefore, that just because he knows he is mortal, he will not enjoy such groveling, but, shutting the door to that sort of thing, cleave for himself to the uplift of his work, leaving them their choice in what concerns themselves, not him (lines 41-56 and 69-72). But though he seems not to claim that weaknesses do not belong to him, their fellow-man, he does maintain that reveling in the fact of weakness and meanness and the imperfections of life is not his foible; his outlook is rosy, not grim; scorning neither high nor low, finding himself akin to opposite natures, he does not scout mankind; and, as for womankind, blesses his good fortune, which, if not theirs, may be, he insinuates, because their treatment of her called out the response they blame (lines 73-120). This being his relation with the public about him, the relation of his work and himself to fame, which starts him in his monologue (stanza i.), is that of one who lays no claim to special honor in his own day; and as to the future he does not anticipate, but awaits judgment (stanzas xvi. and xviii.). What is the meaning of the seventeenth stanza in showing the relation of Shake-

spere's work and personality to the world? Does it intimate that the outpourings of a poet's weakness do not assimilate with the life of other men except in an external way, and that instead of reaching the heart of the world they pass away without permanently affecting it? Is this peculiarly true of Shakespeare's weaknesses, whatever they may have been?

That what makes the poet's inner life distinctively his own must necessarily be deeper than externalities, is the gist of "House." That rich evidence of genius in a poet's work must have been based on more of individual life than can meet the world's eye, is the implication of "Shop."

Does the contention of "Touch him ne'er so lightly," that the world-poet's growth is not an easy process, accord with the view of Shakespeare presented?

Verse-making is compared with love-making in relation to the poet, in the lyric following "Cherries" in "Ferishtah's Fancies," in order to show how it is a process of infinite capabilities, not merely in what has been done, but in all that might be, so that the most one can do in it is little enough; while love-making, although also of infinite significance, is so condensed in each experience of love that the least each one can feel is enough. Verse-making as an occupation in its relation to the world, the subject of the last lyric, asserts that the poet may justly regard the fame that brings love as irrelevant to his artistic aims. If he poured his whole life recklessly into his work for the sake of what it would bring him, taking no joy in life himself, then he might complain with reason if love were lacking. But reward

and aim of another sort inciting him, and his life for its own sake being good, praise or just judgment will be welcome, but love must not affect his design.

Do you think this an ungracious expression of the relation between the poet and the world, or does the self-poise expected on either side, of the poet and his appreciators, appeal to you as a fine element affording a better co-relation; — one tending to awaken a more genuine regard on both sides?

Metaphors drawn from nature, the accepted mode of using imagery in love lyrics, are found to be an insufficient kind of art in "Poetics," compared with similes drawn from human appearance. Does this evolved kind of poetics suggest that the relation of mankind to the poet is fundamental, affecting even his *technique*, — the stuff out of which he must weave his choicest comparisons being human nature itself?

Queries for Discussion. — Is Browning's way of treating of the poet in relation to his public, so as to present a variety of the personalities composing that public, a common trait of poems on the poet? Compare and discuss, for example, with the poems on poets by Tennyson before cited.

Does Browning's philosophy of poetic art, as revealed in these poems, rank him with the critics who hold to the theory of art for art's sake or with those who believe in art for life's sake?

Does the drift of the "Parleying with Christopher Smart" summed up in the closing verses, "Live and learn, not first learn and then live, is our concern," apply especially to poetic art, and is it consistent with the general poetic principle illustrated in "Transcendentalism"?

Would it be a sound criticism to judge of a poet's genius, as Browning suggests in "The Two Poets of Croisic," to ask if he led "a happy life"?

Should the true poet sing to the masses, not to the few, as Naddo says in "Sordello;" and if Browning does not agree with him, is he wrong? (See "Sordello," Book III., lines 784-815.)

What should be the poet's attitude toward his critics? And what should be the critic's attitude toward the poet?

III. *Topic for Paper, Glasswork, or Private Study.* — Browning's Poetics in the Poet-Poems.

Hints: — When you look inquiringly at "Pauline" to discover the artistic reason why its imagery and poetic atmosphere differ so markedly from the rest of Browning's work in which the poet is the subject, the redundancy of its similes is perhaps the most noticeable difference you can put your finger on. For example, when the young poet realizes that the cynicism as to mankind and life, which seemed at first to leave him freer and stronger than ever, isolating him from any outward aim or devotion, was the defect of his special quality of a distinct self-consciousness, or over-consciousness, and was weakening actually, instead of strengthening, the powers he so delighted in, he expresses this in a series of original and striking images, so that they get in one another's way, and he embroiders these images with such picturesque details that the details block the road of the image itself. So, in lines 90-123, he likens this course astray of his soul to the circuit of a celestial body, once free to revolve at large, but now confined to a subordinate path about an inferior orb. Then the sense that this is a direct result of his own nature is

vividly put as a feeling visiting him in dreams that he himself is the fate he flees from ; and then, successively, two images of this same situation of self-disenchantment, each more elaborate than the other, picture it again, — the first that of the swan, like a moonbeam, kept with him, in the ocean-cave where he is, till it loses its beauty ; then, second, that of a radiant god growing less radiant on earth while he sings of heaven to a young witch who lured him from his home. Notice all the details that are added to these similes.

Again, in lines 172–200, what succession of figures illustrates that which has been already said figuratively (156–160), about his half-pleasure, half-disappointment, in finding that Shelley's genius was the world's and not alone his own delight? What other such similes are there? Are the figures in "Pauline" mostly drawn from celestial and natural objects? And when human analogies are used, how are they qualified by a strange or semi-human aspect? Notice lines 451–456, 956 and 957, 1027, etc. Which allusions and figures are drawn from classic legends? (For explanation of these, see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. I., p. 301.) Do these similes suit the poet of "Pauline" especially? Although they fit the character and are an integral part of his confessions, do you feel sure that they were due to design, or that they were in part, at any rate, natural to the young Browning?

"Memorabilia" and "Popularity" are in strong contrast, in their comparatively simple imagery, with the richness of "Pauline." Do they give you the impression of employing a single image more continuously, in all its ins and outs, to fit the idea intended

to be brought out, and of selection of the one, unembarrassed with others that might throng to mind as the most forcible for the embodiment of the idea? Notice what these images are. In "Memorabilia" the metaphor is the moulted eagle feather picked up on the moors. The feather is an event. The moors, miles of them, are blank except for this. This metaphor of double comparison given in the two closing stanzas is co-extensive with the idea the poem conveys. In it, in fact, the poem consists, for the two preceding stanzas but lead up to this, themselves containing but the bare account of the meeting with the man who had once met Shelley. After the picking up of the feather is described and we hear how it is put inside the speaker's breast, and that he forgets "the rest," there is no explanation, — no application of the simile to the particular instance of the meeting with Shelley. Is any needed? Is this a peculiarly vivid and strong way of using imagery; or do you think it obscure?

In "Popularity" the main image used is that of the fisher who has brought to land a netful of the shells which secreted the famous Tyrian dye. This symbol for the poet whose originality of genius has brought the world an infinitely expansible product that can lend beauty and value everywhere, is unfolded in new relations with the idea throughout nine of the thirteen stanzas. Notice that no direct reference is made to the subject of the comparison till the last words are reached; and yet how the significance grows, and how the reader's intelligence is made ready to catch the full force of the allusion to Keats when it does come. Notice, especially, the beauty of the picture of the whelks with the charm of the *sea-wet* still on them, in the eighth stanza; and of

the contrast of that picture with the splendor of the gold-robed king amid his Tyrian-blue hangings, in the next stanza ; and of that again with the picture in the tenth stanza of the gold and blue flower whose beauty the bee is drunken with. Do you think the grotesque quality of the Tyrian dye imagery in the final stanzas, by contrast with the beauty of that of the earlier stanzas, is too rough ? Or is the rudeness of the application to Hobbs *et al.* suitably indicative of the disdain the Keats enthusiast who is speaking feels for the thrifty copyists, and therefore as much in keeping with the plan of the poem as the magical sea-touch is in the working up of the image as to the originality of Keats in the eighth stanza ? Point out the meaning of the metaphors employed in the second and third stanzas. The poet whose light is a star to the one who knew his worth from the first, is conceived of as to God a glow-worm ; and God is imagined as holding him guardingly in his hand, as one might hold a glow-worm out in his hand, keeping it safe there and letting out its light at need to show the way in the dark world. There is a contrast drawn also between the originality of the poet who holds the future through the present (lines 13-15), and the imitateness of the writers who paint the future from the past (line 59) instead of from the present, as Keats did.

Both "Popularity" and "Memorabilia" are written in iambic, four-stressed verse arranged in short and simple stanzas, alternately rhymed. What differences are there in the stanza form in the two poems ? Do double rhymes occur ? In which is the stress changed the oftener so as to fall upon the first syllable of the foot ? Where do you put the stress in line

11 of "Memorabilia," and lines 18, 20, and 55 of "Popularity"?

"Transcendentalism," which is written in blank verse like "Pauline," having the same number of stresses to the line and being without rhyme, has quite a different effect as regards metre, has it not? How do you account for that? And why is it that "How it Strikes a Contemporary" impresses you at once as belonging to the same class with "Transcendentalism" as to metre and poetic manner? How are the metaphors of the harp as opposed to the horn, the flowers with tongues, to the "sudden rose itself" employed to bring out the central idea of the poem?

Are there very few similes in the poem? And aside from the symbol of the king suggesting a mightier King, is there any symbolism fitting and making known the central idea, as in "Memorabilia," "Popularity," and "Transcendentalism"? What is there in the composition of the poem to account for this poetic baldness? Is there any reason why it is appropriate?

"At the 'Mermaid'" is distinguished in metre from the other poems of the Shakespearian group, — all of which have a four-stressed line, — not merely by its different stanza form, — and notice that this is different in each poem, — but also by its steadily trochaic foot. The trochaic beat is kept up with almost no exceptions. Do you find any? To do this without wrenching the accents, and so driving sense-emphasis and metrical emphasis at the same pace, makes an effect of an imperturbable speaker, one who is both self-poised and powerful; or do you derive from the poem an impression of this sort? In what lines do you find the normal measure humored a little? Notice,

with this query in mind, lines 28, 41, 58, and ask if these are any of them lines where elision or repetition of a word causes an external unevenness which the sense-emphasis, because of its internal influence, rightly cures? Notice the rhymes and double rhymes occurring in the Shakespearian group. Are there more departures from the normal iambic metre of "Shop" and the anapæstic of "House" than in "At the 'Mermaid'" from its trochaic metre? The metaphors used throughout "At the 'Mermaid'" are various and unusual. Notice what these are: for example, *sowing* song-sedition; *blown* up by ambition, and *bubble-king*, etc.; *breeding* insight; use to pay *its Lord* my duty, as applied to Shakespeare's religion, and use to own *a lord*, as applied to his respect for title and rank, which are favorite topics of dispute; *largess*; *gold*, *brass*, and *orichalc*, the first representing an idealistic view, the second a derogatory one, the third a rational seeing of things as mixed of good and evil; *threw Venus*, etc. (For allusions, see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, Vol. IX., p. 298.) Are they appropriate to the speaker?

The German phrase "Weltschmerz" (line 132) seems decidedly inappropriate. Is it a modern expression, and not likely to have been used in the Elizabethan period? Are the Bible references, "Balaam-like" (line 92), and the quotation from the Gospels — Matthew xv. 17, Mark vii. 19 (lines 135 and 136) — in keeping with Shakespeare's diction as we know it in the Plays? Notice the final hit at Jonson (lines 143 and 144), who was reputed to be envious of Shakespeare, and who did succeed Daniel in the laureateship.

In "House" and "Shop" metaphors of so many

kinds are not used. Instead there is a continuous symbolism carried on throughout each poem. All the figures used in the one poem suit the "house" comparison, as in the other they suit the "shop" comparison. Point these out, and show how they are applied in each of these poems. Sometimes there is a double appropriateness in these comparisons, as in the suggestion of the shop-keeper's studying the *Times*, as if it were not merely intended to bring up the picture of the man reading the newspaper while he swept the money in his cash drawer, but also to recall Shakespeare's phrase in "Hamlet" of the study of the dramatist being to show forth "the body of the time its form and pressure." Instance others having this double reference to Shakespeare. Why should there be this difference in the way the imagery is employed in "At the Mermaid" and in the two following poems? Is there a reason for it? And what do you think it is? Notice that this mode of using an image in all its ins and outs to symbolize the leading idea is like that followed in "Memorabilia" and "Popularity," while "At the 'Mermaid'" and "How it Strikes a Contemporary" are more alike in using another mode, and yet that they differ in using in the one case a great deal of imagery and in the other only a bare simile or so. Why? Does each suit its speaker?

Trace out the application of the figure to the idea as it is put first in the mouth of the first speaker in "Touch him ne'er so lightly," and, then, in the rejoinder giving a different point of view. Is the same measure kept up in the Album Lines? Does the same metaphor recur in these Album Lines, and how is it adapted now to suit still a third purpose?

The lyric from "Ferishtah" is not adorned with

either metaphors or symbolism. What sort of charm has it? Merely the grace of well-adjusted rhythm and rhyme?

"Poetics," like this lyric, has five-stressed lines alternately rhymed, but without the double-rhymed couplet which concludes each stanza of the lyric. But "Poetics" is like "Touch him ne'er so lightly" in using the same metaphors in different ways to suit the expression of two different speakers regarding poetics. Do you also find the poem as a whole symbolic of the larger meaning, suggested in the second part of this programme, that the poet's poetics depend upon humanizing his metaphors?

How do "Goldoni" and "The Names" compare as sonnets with the earlier sonnet by Browning, "Eyes, calm beside thee"? (For articles showing the different sonnet forms in use, see E. B. Brownlow's "Wyatt's Sonnets and their Sources," and "Curiosities in Sonnet Literature," *Poet-lore*, Vol. III., pp. 127 and 545, March and November, 1891.)

Queries for Discussion. — Is Browning dramatic both in artistic form and in conception, even when he is giving forth specific truths with relation to poetic art?

But if it be granted that he presents different points of view, can it be claimed that he does not show his preference for a special point of view as regards the poet and poetic art?

Does he present the purely lyrical art of the subjective poet as fairly as the more objective art of the dramatic poet?

EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

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I. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
 — The Subject-Matter and Characterization.

Hints: — Sketches of the subject-matter of the poems may be found in the Notes to the *Camberwell Browning*, as given above. By following these through in connection with the poems, Browning's manner of presenting his themes may be seen in greater relief.

In "Caliban" we have the untutored thoughts of an undeveloped savage about God. Is he like Shakespeare's Caliban in the possession of considerable intelligence and an appreciation of natural beauty? Notice the peculiarity of the verb in the third person without any pronoun, which Caliban almost always uses when speaking of himself. This peculiarity is characteristic of language in a low stage of develop-

ment, when distinction between first, second, and third person is either vague or entirely lacking. Where does he represent himself as lying in the first stanza, and what little events in nature does he describe as taking place around him? Why does he think it will be safer for him to talk about God now than in the winter, and who does he mean would be vexed if he heard him, — Prosper or God? What dwelling does he assign to Setebos, and of what does he make him the creator? Is it true to life that a savage should regard the moon as cold, or is that a fact known only to modern science? Notice the logicalness with which he gives a reason for his proposition in regard to Setebos. What are his reasons, and with what poetical simile does he illustrate? Going on to give further particulars as to the creations of Setebos, what further reason does he give for the creative activity of Setebos, and what argument does he use to show that he could not have made things on any other account? Notice the illustration he uses, putting himself in the place of the capricious creator, and what conclusion he comes to. What further step does Caliban take in the next stanza as to what the capriciousness of Setebos shows, and what illustration does he use to clinch his argument? What modification does he make in the character already given Setebos, and what quality does he add, and how does his illustration resemble the previous ones?

Having decided that Setebos is rough and ill at ease, with his inquiring nature Caliban must have a reason for it. To account for this he has to imagine a cause behind Setebos. Is he quite clear as to its being a cause or an effect? What are the characteristics of the "Quiet"? And how does he illustrate by his

own feelings? Is his feeling in regard to the quails quite consistent with his pleasure in making and marring clay, or does it show a little glimpse of aspiration in his nature not before observable? He immediately decides that he is more interested in Setebos than in the "Quiet." What new idea does Caliban add in the second statement just following of the reason for Setebos creating the world, and how does he illustrate out of his own experience? What difference of opinion was there between Caliban and his dam about Setebos and the "Quiet," and what further reason does Caliban give to prove that he is right in attributing creation to Setebos? What are Caliban's conclusions in regard to the supposition that Setebos may like what profits him? Notice again his illustrations from his own experience. What examples of the wantonness of Setebos does he give in the next stanza, and what does he conclude as to the way to please him? What is the only hope that things will ever change, and what other point of disagreement between Caliban and his dam is brought out? How does Caliban think he would best order his life to escape the ire of Setebos? What happens now in the midst of Caliban's theologizing, and how does it affect him?

In "Cleon" we follow Cleon's thoughts as he writes a letter to Protus in answer to one received from him with generous gifts. The opening lines of the poem are the greeting of the letter, after which Cleon goes on to speak of the gifts he has received. Notice how he does not enumerate them, but with a few powerful strokes portrays the scene of the unlading of the galley. Not only do we get an idea of the richness of the gifts sent, but we also receive a definite *impression* of the dwelling-place of Cleon.

What do you gather from the next stanza in regard to the character of Protus? What do we learn of Cleon himself in the next stanza in his answer to Protus that all he has heard of him is true? Notice that Cleon is a universal artist, and how he argues that a universal composite mind such as his is greater than the mind of the specialist. To a judge who only sees one way at once, the composite mind does not look so great as the mind of the past great in one thing. Then he shows how life is like a huge mosaic, every man being a figure in the pattern, and that progress is not the blotting out of what has gone before, but the combining of all the parts into a perfect picture. The divine men of old had each reached at some one point the outmost verge of man's faculties, and who can ever reach farther than they did in any one direction? Show the appropriateness of the illustration of the sphere. What fiction does Cleon say he once wrote out in his desire to vindicate the purpose of Zeus in man's life, — a thing which his soul cried out to Zeus to know? But though this is a dream, what does he say is not a dream? And since all material things progress, can it be possible, he asks, that the soul deteriorates? How does he make himself stand as a proof that the soul does not deteriorate? Does he show modesty or egotism in this instancing of himself as an example of soul-progress? In the next stanza what do we learn in regard to Protus's attitude toward death, and what he thinks Cleon's must be? Before answering this question he goes off on a long course of reasoning. Does he decide that admiration grows with knowledge, or does he seem to think it debatable? What case does he suppose in order to present his argument more

forcibly? Notice the contrast he draws between nature outside of man and man. Instead, however, of asking Zeus to add to man the quality of being able to realize and understand the joy and beauty of life, what does he think might more reasonably have been asked? And why does the possession of consciousness seem so horrible to him? How does Cleon prove to himself that Zeus, in spite of this awful failure of the flesh to attain to the heights of joy seen by the soul, has not created man to suffer simply for his own delight? Still, is there any sign to show that Zeus cares? And so what is the final dismal conclusion as to progress?

In answer to the supposition of Protus that Cleon in his art-works finds joy and will gain immortality, what question does he put to the King, and how does he illustrate the fact that an accurate view of joy is not the same as feeling joy? Is the thought that his work lives any consolation to him? How does he feel that death is even doubly horrible to him? What does he dare imagine at times to be his need? What hint of Cleon's attitude to Christianity is given in the last stanza, and to whom does it appear that Protus wished to send a letter if he could find from Cleon where it should be delivered?

Sum up now in a few words the conception of God held by Caliban and that held by Cleon.

In "Saul," the poet David is speaking. How does he say Abner greeted him? Through this greeting do we learn what the mission of David is? How does David describe Saul's appearance? Notice the order in which David plays his tunes, beginning with those appealing to the love of nature and ending with what? Note the effect upon Saul.

David sings again, stanza iv. now, and instead of merely telling about the tunes he played, he quotes the words of the song. What does he celebrate in this song, and how is Saul affected? Note the beauty of David's description of Saul's partial response to his music, David's growing desire to make the proper appeal to the King, and his attempt in the next song.

Still, though the King is pleased by the immortality of deed promised him in this, the "sign" of his cure is yet lacking. In this scene David's love for Saul reaches its climax, and in what does this result? Notice that he drops his harp and song here, changes from the poet to the prophet. It is to be observed, also, that, although the truth comes upon him with the force of a revelation, he yet supplements it with his own reasoning powers. Show in what way he does this. Does Browning's portraiture of David as a poet, thinker, and prophet, agree with the impression we get of him from the Bible?

Notice the contrast between the attitude of Cleon and Ben Ezra. Although the Hebrew considers age the best, what does he feel about the hopes and fears of youth? He does not remonstrate on account of them, but prizes them. Notice the poetical imagery of the second stanza. In saying (iv.) that it were a poor vaunt of life were man but made to feed on joy, he is again opposed to Cleon. What does he rejoice over and welcome, and what comforts him? Failure, so horrible to Cleon, is a joy to Ben Ezra. What does he recognize with Cleon is the distinction between man and brute? Do they not equally recognize the inadequateness of the flesh to keep pace with the soul? Just as after declaring old age superior he then proceeds to show the need and use of youth as a

complement, so after declaring the superiority of the soul Ezra proceeds to show the use and need of the flesh. The beauty of all material things appears to him, and he is filled with the goodness of life and praise for its Creator. Whatever failure may appear in the flesh, he has faith that the maker will sometime remake complete.

Does he indicate in the next two stanzas a desire that the remaking complete will be to raise the flesh so that it will be as equal to the soul's needs as the brutes' is to theirs, since, pleasant as the flesh is now, the soul always yearns for rest? He hopes that we may not always say that progress is in spite of flesh, but that flesh helps soul as soul helps flesh.

In xlii. he returns to the first thought of welcoming age. Show how he enlarges upon the idea, and what he considers are all the advantages of old age, and what is best suited to youth in contrast with old age up to stanza xliii.

What does he decide (xliii.) are the important things in life? (xlvi.) Enlarging upon the simile of the potter's wheel, what ideas does he evolve from it about the permanence of truth? Explain the force of the imagery in xxix. (xxx.) The imagery in this stanza is "somewhat obscure, but life having already been compared to a vase or cup, Ben Ezra means by this imagery that the uses of life to God are the important things to be considered, that our lives are the cup for the festive board of the Lord. When the cup is finally complete, what need to think of the stress of earth's wheel? What is the concluding thought of the poem?

"An Epistle" is a companion picture to "Cleon," presenting in a letter the attitude of a learned Arab

toward the great fact of that time. He introduces himself and the person to whom he is writing in the greeting of the letter. How much do you learn of both in this preliminary greeting? Note, in the next paragraph, how he begins his letter by talking of anything and everything but the one thing he really wants to talk about. Who do we learn is to carry the letter? In the next paragraph his anxiety to tell his experience gets the better of his reluctance. Can you guess what are the causes of his reluctance to tell? Observe the off-hand way in which he begins to tell the story. Does he betray his deep interest in it as he goes on? Is it the fact of the cure that impresses him most, or the effect of the cure upon Lazarus's mind?

How does he describe Lazarus and his manner of looking at life? Is it this which makes Karshish think the cure of a different nature from those he has been used to in his medical experience?

Is the difficulty with Lazarus that, in his larger view of life, he has given up the exercise of human initiative and has become a sort of fatalist?

Notice the Arab's apologetic manner when telling what Lazarus says of the Nazarene who cured him; his attempt to dismiss it as a trivial matter, while he turns to things of more moment like the blue-flowering borage; his return to the subject again in spite of himself, and his evident wish that such a story might be true.

Notice the differences between the learning of Cleon and that of Karshish. Which seems to have the more need of a new religion, and which seems to be more deeply sceptical?

What do you learn from the first stanza of "A

Death in the Desert" as to the nature and form of the communication which the speaker in the poem is to make? In the next eight paragraphs what scene is vividly portrayed by Pamphylax in his parchment? Is there anything so far to indicate whose death-bed is being described? Has sufficient of the personality of the dying man been revealed to make the stanzas following intelligible? Explain how he describes himself to be so withdrawn into his depths that his consciousness of his own or others' personality is dimmed and he could believe those about him to be James and Peter, or even John himself. How does the speaker of the poem expound the doctrine of the dying man in regard to the soul, and how does this explain his feelings as he describes them in the preceding stanza?

With what image does he further explain his sensations in the next stanza, and how does he reveal who he really is? What doubt suggests itself to him, and what account of his past life does he give in the next two stanzas? What idea do we receive of his age and of his influence as long as he is alive? Sum up the arguments used by him in the next stanza as assurance for those unborn generations who have not themselves seen or heard, and who he feels will have doubts of the truth. Are the arguments in the nature of proof, or are they simply an expression of his own overwhelming sense of the truth of what he has seen and heard?

Is the main thought to be gained from the following stanza that the realization of divine love is the most important need of man, and that just how it was revealed to man is not so important as the fact that it has been revealed in some way?

In the next stanza is there any force in his argument as a proof of the truth of what he has seen, or is it rather a reiteration of the fact that he is sure of it himself? What arguments of the doubter does John next present, and how does he meet them? The first argument he presents he calls the Pagan's teaching. How does he modify it in the next following stanza? Point out the essential difference in the two arguments, and also the points of resemblance. In the next stanza what reasons does he give for the weakness of what he calls the Pagan's teaching? What further questionings of the doubter does he then present?

Sum up his final arguments. Does he not allow some good in a Pagan's way of arriving at the truth—that is, a yearning for it until he crystallizes it into a set form which is an image at least of the truth? What are the few remaining stanzas (except the last) taken up with? What is meant in the last stanza by Cerinthus being lost? What other passage in the poem throws light on the attitude of Cerinthus? From his whole course of argument do you get the impression that John's belief rests upon faith and not upon reason?

How is the scene of the poem presented in the first stanza of "Bishop Blougram"? Notice how the Bishop next touches off what he supposes to be the attitude of Gigadibs towards him in his social capacity. Is this a true reading of Gigadibs's character, or is the Bishop so used to having court paid to him that he takes it for granted a poor literary man will feel honored by his attentions? Through the Bishop's talk, what sort of criticism do we learn Gigadibs had been making?

What do you think of the Bishop's ideal of taking

things as we find them and making them as fair as possible, in comparison with Gigadibs's, of forming an ideal of life which we try to realize? (See lines 86-99.) Does the simile which the Bishop brings forward to illustrate the two ideals do justice to Gigadibs's, considering that the Bishop, by following his ideal, could surround himself with just such treasures as he uses to point his argument against Gigadibs, while Gigadibs, in following his ideal, would be likely to have little material comfort of any sort? What do you think of the Bishop's argument that one cannot stay fixed in unbelief any more than he can in belief? Notice his remark to the effect that one feels round to find *some sense* in which accepted beliefs may be the "Way, the Truth, the Life." Having proved to his satisfaction that one must either have a life of doubt diversified by faith or of faith diversified by doubt, what utilitarian reasons does he give for himself preferring the former? Since he can get what he best likes this way, and cannot get it without announcing to the world his unequivocal belief, he turns his belief side toward the world and keeps his doubts to himself. He next proceeds to show why, having reached this conviction, he chose the most absolute form of faith. How does his utilitarianism assert itself here?

Does Gigadibs appear to be impressed with the weight of the Bishop's arguments? How would the Bishop defend himself, suppose he were to admit Gigadibs's implications that he is a beast? Is his argument here sound, or has it a touch of sophistry? It is equivalent to saying, "God has made me selfish, comfort-loving, and power-loving, therefore I will make myself as much stronger in these ways as I can." However, he is n't going to admit himself so

low, and answering to the objection that the world will think him either a fool or a knave, what further utilitarian argument does he bring forth?

As Gigadibs still refuses to admire him, he wants to know if he would like him to be a Napoleon or a Shakespeare. Are his reasons for not attempting any such ideals thoroughly in character?

What does Blougram reply to Gigadibs's objection that such imperfect faith cannot accomplish faith's work any better than unbelief?

Does Blougram's reply (line 600) seem to mean that the existence of doubt gives the human will a chance to choose between faith and doubt, and the more doubts one has, the more praiseworthy it is to will to keep oneself in an attitude of faith?

Do you agree with Blougram that belief can be a matter of will? Or must it be a matter of conviction?

What do you think of Blougram's argument that creation is meant to hide God all it can? In saying that with him faith means perpetual unbelief, he implies that belief and faith are not correlative terms, but the very preservation of faith depends upon unbelief, because its value consists in its being held to in the face of all odds. Notice his various illustrations of this point.

What has the Bishop to say to the objection of Gigadibs, that he views life narrowly and grossly? Do you agree with his argument, that when you are living in the world you may as well take all the world has to offer and be worldly? Gigadibs still holds out that it would be better frankly to confess his attitude toward the world. And here the Bishop pounces on him. Is his (Gigadibs's) basis of ethical conduct upon any more truthful basis than the Bishop's faith?

He finally rounds out his argument by showing that he has more worldly gains to show in his life than Gigadibs will ever have, which proves his way the best. The Bishop admits that there is one sort of life which would be better than his; what is it?

What practical effect does the Bishop's talk have on Gigadibs? Point out the false steps in the Bishop's argument. Is whatever he says of good rendered false by his constantly proving his points on the basis of their practical, material advantage to himself?

If Gigadibs had been as subtle in argument as the Bishop, could he have beaten him?

For further suggestions on "Christmas-Eve" and "Easter-Day" than those given in the Notes, see Introduction to Vol. IV. *Camberwell Brooding*. Follow carefully the thought-moods as sketched in the abstract of these two poems, and notice the forms of expression in which they are clothed as indicated in the Introduction. Contrast the attitude of mind of such a character as the speaker in this poem with that of Blougram's, — the one who is religious because he deliberately chooses religion as the most expedient scheme of life, the other whose whole soul is filled with religious aspiration, — the one whose doubts revolve about orthodox creeds, the other who realizes that the truth or falsity of orthodox creeds does not affect the essential truths of religion, namely, that God is Love and Power, revealable to every human soul directly, through its recognition of power in the universe and of love in its own heart. There would have been room in this man's theology for a Bishop Blougram, would there not? The Bishop's special way of holding on to faith was probably the only way in which he could catch even a glimpse of the eternal

verities of religion, just as the Dissenters had their way of praising God.

Queries for Discussion. — How many of the characters in these poems are drawn from actual life?

How many of the poems may be said to have sources, and how many of them are purely imaginary?

Dr. Charles G. Ames, writing upon "Caliban" in the published volume of "Boston Browning Society Papers," says: —

"Three things I get directly from the poem: (1) It is a satire upon all who plant themselves upon the narrow island of individualism and think to reach completeness of character and culture without sharing the common life of the world. (2) It is a protest against the vagaries of the understanding, divorced from the deeper reason and the moral sense . . . (3) But chiefly, I think, the poet means it as a satire upon all religious theories which construct a divinity out of the imperfections of humanity, instead of submitting humanity to be inspired and moulded by the perfections of divinity."

Do you think Browning had any such didactic purpose in writing this poem, or that he merely desired to present graphically a low phase of religious aspiration?

Does this prevent one from drawing any moral lesson at all from the poem?

Do you draw the same lessons or different ones from those suggested by Mr. Ames?

Is the portraiture of John in agreement with his personality as derivable from the New Testament?

On this point Mrs. M. G. Glazebrook says, in her paper on "A Death in the Desert" in the published volume of "Browning Studies": —

"We have again the loved and loving disciple who leant on his Master's breast at supper, and in his old age continually bade his 'little children, love one another.' He is learned in Greek philosophy and speculative, as the author of the Gospel called by his name must have been; mystical and visionary as became him who had received the revelation of Patmos. He is full of the responsibility which rests upon him as the last survivor of those who had seen and known Christ; fearful, also, of the heresies and 'Anti-Christ's' already beginning to disturb the Church, of whom the Ebionites, or followers of Cerinthus, who denied his Lord's divinity, give him cause for most anxiety."

II. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
—Phases of Religious Thought Illustrated in these Poems.

Hints: — Each one of these poems may be regarded as marking an especial phase of religious development. Beginning with Caliban, who stands for the natural, uncultured reasoning of the savage, "Saul" next gives the essence of the prophetic period of Jewish religious development. In Cleon we have the cultured, intellectual reasoning of a Greek at a time when any inspiration the Greek religion ever had has been dissipated in the light of cold reason, yet there is present the same religious yearning as there is in David. "An Epistle" gives still another view, that of an Arab confronted with the problem of the new revealed religion.

"A Death in the Desert" gives the reminiscent mood of the man who was actually a contemporary of the event prophesied by David. Rabbi Ben Ezra gives that of a Jew of later date. In "Bishop Blougram" and "Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day" we

come down to religious reasoning of the nineteenth century.

Give an account of the attributes of Setebos as conceived by Caliban. Show how Caliban's conception is a mingling of his observations of the processes of nature and his own interpretations of these processes. Had he observed in nature any other qualities than those of capriciousness and cruelty? Is his interpretation colored by the treatment he has received from Prospero? Notice how his illustrations are all drawn from his own experience.

Why do you suppose he thought the stars were not made by Setebos? Perhaps because they seemed to him to be beyond the reach of that god's capriciousness. Is his notion that above Setebos reigns another God, the Quiet, indicative of aspiration, though of a very rude sort, in Caliban's nature?

Is there any trace of love in Caliban's reasoning? Had he experienced any love in his life? Setebos is a god of power only, but is he a god of Omnipotent power? Notice that Caliban is not quite sure whether he was made by the Quiet or whether he conquered the Quiet. Does this suggest to your mind the Greek myth of Saturn and Jupiter?

Is there any suggestion of an embryonic problem of evil in Caliban's mind? (See line 170 fol.) Caliban's solution of the existence of evil is that Setebos does all for his own amusement. Should you say, on the whole, that Caliban is a little better than the god he imagines? If so, how does he show it? What is his opinion about an after-life? Having discovered just what Caliban's religious conceptions are, it will be interesting to show how close they are to a true savage religion.

Mr. Arthur Symons says, in speaking of this poem: "I think Mr. Huxley has said that the poem is a truly scientific representation of the development of religious ideas in primitive man." Unfortunately scholars are not all agreed as to the exact nature of primitive religious ideas, some contending that fear played a large part in the origin of religion, others that love was the root of religious aspiration, and others that religion originated in ancestor worship. There are still other theories to be considered, and if it be desired to go into the matter thoroughly, the following books may be consulted: Fiske's "Myths and Myth-Makers," chapter on "The Primeval Ghost World;" also his "Idea of God;" Tylor's "Primitive Culture;" Max Müller's Essays on "The Science of Religion," in "Chips from a German Workshop" and "Contributions to the Science of Mythology;" Andrew Lang's "Custom and Myth" and "Myth, Ritual and Religion;" Dr. D. G. Brinton's "Religions of Primitive Peoples."

It may be said that Caliban's theology fits in best with the assumption that savage religion began with ancestor worship mingled with the emotion of fear, from which would finally come the god who made all things. Having arrived at that stage, it is easy to imagine a thinking savage wondering why his god treated his creations in the way he did, and then drawing conclusions as to his nature.

Turning to "Saul," what do you find are the chief characteristics of David's religious conceptions? He has discovered a god in nature, just as Caliban did; how do his conceptions of this god in nature differ from those of Caliban? How does his conception of God become enlarged? Is this enlarged con-

ception a reflection of his own nature, just as Caliban's was a reflection of his? David, however, is conscious that in loving more than he had supposed God loved, he is putting himself above God, and so the truth breaks in upon him that God's love must be greater than his, a mere man's, and that, being all-powerful, he can accomplish what he (David) can only aspire to do. Is there anything in the poem to indicate that David's prophecy was the result of a supernatural revelation, or does it seem to be the natural unfolding of God's spirit within David so that he sees far ahead of other men? For light upon Browning's truthfulness in the portraiture of this period of religious aspiration, see Darmesteter's "Selected Essays," trans. by Helen B. Jastrow, and the Essay on "Saul" in J. T. Nettlehip's "Robert Browning: Essays and Thoughts."

In Cleon the crude observation and sensations of the savage have given place to the cultured observation and sensations of the Greek. He has advanced far beyond that stage where his God is a reflection of himself. Zeus is really a survival from a more savage age, which fails to come up to the requirements of Cleon. Thence his great disquietude, and his reaching out toward a conception of God that includes the idea of love and care. But while Caliban bases his reasoning on merely personal experiences, Cleon bases his not only upon his own experiences, but upon the sympathy which he feels with others. Aware of the existence of love in himself and others, he longs for some sign that love is the ruling quality of the Divine mind. The sign of this love would be the assurance that joy such as the soul sees might one day be in truth experienced, and that the progress of

the soul, which is the distinctive mark of man as separated from the brute, is not to end in nothing.

Do you agree with Cleon that the sympathetic mind which enters into sympathy with all forms of art and reaches a high point, if not the highest in the creation of all, is a more developed mind than that which is specially developed in one direction and thereby reaches the highest point? Do you think that the highest enjoyment comes from direct experience or active participation, or from entering into sympathy with the experience of others? Can sympathy be entire without a personal knowledge of the same thing? For example, is one happier playing the piano himself, even if he does it only moderately well, or listening to a great performer? Or can one really enjoy great playing if he has not tried to do the same thing himself? Which is the ideal of Cleon?

Notice that Saul and Cleon both want the same assurance, that of personal immortality. Has Cleon any notion of evolution? Do you agree with him that new things do not blot out the old, but that all persist to form at last a completed whole? Notice that Cleon rejects just the sort of manifestation from the infinite that he longs for. Why do you suppose that is? Because he listens only to the dictates of his intellect, and not at all to the dictates of his heart? Does Browning's Cleon truly portray Greek thought at the time of Christ? (For information on this point, see Zeller's "A History of Eclecticism in Greek Philosophy," Lewes's "History of Philosophy," Vol. I., Eighth and Ninth Epochs.)

In "A Death in the Desert" the God of love is made manifest. Against all supposable doubts *John* holds firm ground, yet he is very liberal in his

attitude toward those who have had aspirations leading to truth. Observe how John sketches the stages of religious belief in the passage beginning, "first, like a brute obliged by facts to learn," like Caliban; next, as "man may, obliged by his own mind," like Cleon. But even such reasoners about God as Caliban and Cleon do it through the gift of God, — note passage following. And all this is "midway help" till the fact be reached indeed through the divine incarnation. He accepts the fact of man's anthropomorphic conceptions of God, and declares that they have glimmers of truth, but that in Christ we have the truth indeed; no subjective conception emanating from the mind of man, but an objective truth.

What do you think of John's theory of the miracles? Is his ground very strong, or does it leave a loop-hole for a natural instead of a supernatural explanation of them? What is the theory of life to be deduced from this poem? Mrs. Glazebrook thus sums it up: "Man's life consists in never ceasing progress. The god-like power is imparted to him gradually, and step by step he approaches nearer to absolute truth—to divine perfection. But in this mortal life the goal can never be attained: the ideal which he strives to realize here, exists only in heaven, and awaits him as a reward of all his faithful efforts. For, should he cease to strive, and renounce the divine ideals, he forfeits his right to life, and brings upon himself the condemnation of death." What relation to John's theories of life has his belief in regard to the relations of the body, mind, and soul? Upon this point Professor Corson writes, in his "Introduction to the Study of Browning": "The doctrine of the trinal unity of man (the what Does, what

Knows, what Is) ascribed to John (lines 82-104) and upon which his discourse may be said to proceed, leads up to the presentation of the final stage of the Christian life on earth—that stage when man has won his way to the Kingdom of the ‘what Is’ within himself, and when he no longer needs the outward supports to his faith which he needed before he passed from the ‘what Knows.’ Christianity is a religion which is only secondarily a doctrine addressed to the ‘what Knows.’ It is first of all a religion whose fountain-head is a Personality in whom all that is spiritually potential in man was realized, and in responding to whom the soul of man is quickened and regenerated.” Would such a theory of life as this have been possible to John, or is it very suggestive of nineteenth-century philosophy? This poem was written with a view to answering the attacks made upon the historical bases of Christianity by such men as Strauss and Renan. To quote Mrs. Glazebrook again, “In the critical examination of the evangelical records, the Fourth Gospel suffered most. . . . Strauss pronounced it to be a controversial work, written late in the second century after Christ, by a profound theologian of the Greek Gnostic and anti-Jewish school, whose design was not to add another to the existing biographies of Christ, not to represent him as a real man, nor to give an account of any human life, but to produce an elaborate theological work in which, under the veil of allegory, the Neo-platonic conception of Christ as the Logos, the realized Word of God, the divine principle of light and life should be developed.” If it be desired to pursue these investigations further, see Renan’s “Life of Christ,” and Strauss’s “Life

of Christ" which has been translated by George Eliot; also Mrs. Glazebrook's article on "A Death in the Desert" in "Browning Studies."

In "An Epistle" is there any definite presentation of a conception of God? There is depicted rather the effect on character of a glimpse of life from the divine standpoint. According to Karshish, the effect has not been altogether good upon Lazarus. Is that because an infinite view of life showing how all works together for good, confuses a finite intelligence, so that he is no longer able to direct his will toward working for any positive ideal, but leaves himself too much in the hands of God and is guided therefore by emotions? On the other hand, perhaps Karshish did not rightly interpret the character of Lazarus, because his own mind was biassed by a too confined and narrow view of life. Which do you think more likely? It will be interesting here to compare what the poet says, evidently in his own person, in "Two Poets of Croisic" (lines 464-528).

How does the attitude of Karshish differ from that of Cleon? Should you say that he was not as conscious as Cleon of the need of a new revelation in religion, yet that he could more easily be convinced of its truth?

Of what race were the Arabs, and what was their religion at that time? Were they distinguished for their scientific attainments, as the poem indicates? (For information on these topics, see "Encyclopædia Britannica," article "Arabia.")

In "Rabbi Ben Ezra" we find that the Rabbi agrees with Cleon as to the progress of the human soul. But Cleon's progress is an intellectual progress, while Ezra's is a spiritual progress. While Cleon

longs for the enjoyment of the full development of self, Ezra longs for the full development of self only that he may give delight to his Creator. Where Cleon's aspirations make the failure to attain them seem a black horror, Ezra's aspirations fill him with hope. He belongs to the race that has full assurance of the existence of a God who watches over the affairs of men, but a God jealous of his own prerogatives. Is there much assurance of the love of God as Ezra conceives him? Is he not rather like a perfect architect who fashions men for his own glory, differing from Caliban's God mainly in the fact that, instead of enjoying the suffering which he causes mankind, he administers it with love as a means of perfecting man to grace the after time?

How truthful a representation of Jewish opinion is this poem? (For this see *Camberwell Browning*, Notes, p. 311.) Miss Mary M. Cohen, writing on "Browning's Hebraic Sympathies" (*Poet-love*, Vol. III., pp. 250-254, May, 1891), says that in this poem "Browning has seized the essence of Jewish faith and hope, holding it aloft in the crystal of language. There is no doubt that the writer had drunk deeply at the well of Hebraic thought; not otherwise could he have composed verses which in their majestic music and their noble meaning seem to echo something of the solemn earnestness and inspiration of Isaiah or Job."

In "Bishop Blougram" we have reflected all the intellectual doubts of a cultured man of the nineteenth century, and a way of meeting them peculiar to a certain type of mind. Suppose belief is swept away as it was in the Bishop's case, is there anything against his argument, that it will be best for himself and humanity if he retain what was once his belief as

a living ideal, in the faith that it has a better chance of being the truth than an ideal based upon unbelief? But does not the Bishop utterly stultify himself by making the good he wishes to gain almost absolutely selfish and worldly, and also by posing to the world as a sincere and devout believer? The effect of unbelief in this century has been to send a good many intellectual men into the Church of Rome. Does Browning in this poem present truthfully the bases of their faith, at the same time that in Blougram he portrays a type of a worldly nature rather than that of a pious nature? Notice Cardinal Wiseman's criticism of the poem quoted in Notes, *Camberwell Browning*, p. 295. For comparison with Browning's treatment of the subject, see Ward's "The Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman," chap. xxiii.; Wiseman's "Lectures on Science and Revealed Religion."

In "Christmas-Eve" the religious attitude is given of a man who sees that the truth of religion is not in outward forms or dogmas, which vary according to the needs of different individuals, but that it is in the fundamental aspiration of every soul toward God. What does the speaker give as the basis of his own individual faith? Should you say that his belief was dependent upon the acceptance of historical Christianity, or does he use some of its dogmas as symbols of the highest possible conceptions in religion? Is he right in insisting that he cannot express truth for any one but himself?

In "Easter-Day" the difficulties of living a Christian life are discussed. What are these difficulties? What relation should this life have to an infinite beyond? Compare Bishop Blougram's ideals of living with the speaker's in this poem. Contrast

this poet's way of facing and answering doubts with the Bishop's. What is the difference in the nature of the doubts of a Cleon, the Bishop, and those expressed in "Easter-Day"? Do the ideals expressed in "Christmas-Eve" and "Easter-Day" appeal to you as being both rational and mystical, and full of deep religious conviction despite the doubts, not answered certainly with orthodox arguments?

Queries for Discussion. — It has been objected that Caliban's theology is not truly primitive, but might it be said that the intention of Browning is not so much to give an exact representation of savage ideas of God, as to show how the conception of God is colored by the experiences and observations of man in undeveloped stages of mind? Dr. Berdoe considers Caliban's theology to be much like that of Calvin (of whom an account may be found in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," Account of Calvin). Do you see the resemblances?

Writing upon this point in *Poet-love* (Vol. III., p. 294, May, 1891), Dr. Hugh A. Clarke says: "These anthropomorphic conceptions of deity have, when presented in their native ugliness with the directness and incisiveness of this poem, so repellent an aspect that we feel compelled to repudiate them, for ourselves if not for our neighbors. But they are in some form or another so universal, and the faculty of seeing moles in each other's eyes being equally so, it is not to be wondered at that this poem has been used as a stone to throw, now at the Agnostic, now at the Calvinist, now at the Evangelical. That it hits every one at whom it is thrown is the best proof that the throwers would do well to examine their own domestic architecture to discover whether or

not there was an over-sufficiency of glass in its construction."

Is the prophecy put into David's mouth, in "Saul," more explicit than is warranted by the prophetic utterances attributed to the real David? See Psalms ii., viii., xiv., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxix., lxxxix., xci. Miss Cohen, in the article already cited, says: "I find the poet astonishingly correct, as a rule, in his grasp of the Hebraic nature. In but one poem does he seem to me to introduce a feature with which I can justly find fault; I mean the anachronism and unfitness of attaching the Trinitarian idea to such a distinctly Jewish poem as 'Saul.'"

Do the conclusions of "A Death in the Desert" seem to you to form a strong argument against Strauss and Renan? Or does it seem to you that there is a certain begging of the question, not only on account of the fact that there are weak points in the argument, but because the poet has made the mouthpiece of his arguments John himself? Upon these points Mrs. Glazebrook remarks that "The tendency of the argument is to diminish the importance of the original events—historical or traditional—on which the Christian religion is based. 'It is not worth while,' the writer seems to say to Strauss and his followers, 'to occupy ourselves with discussions about miracles and events, which are said to have taken place a long time ago, and can now neither be denied nor proved. What we are concerned with is Christianity as it is now: as a religion which the human mind has, through many generations, developed, purified, spiritualized; and which has reacted on human nature and made it wiser and nobler. . . . But it may in return very justly be asked if Mr. Browning can really intend to

advocate that something less than perfect truthfulness, which would be implied in the continued unquestioning acceptance of a dogmatic religion in its entirety, after the bases of many of its doctrines have been impugned. . . . All that we know of Mr. Browning's candour and keenness of perception forbids us to accept such a conclusion. But it is quite consistent with his customary method to have put the case against Strauss in this forcible, dramatic form. . . . His religious sense was revolted by the assumption that there was nothing in Christianity which could survive the destruction of the miraculous and supernatural elements in its history. He desired to represent Christianity as an entirely spiritual religion, independent of external, material agencies."

Are these poems all thoroughly dramatic in their presentation of religious thought, or are there certain resemblances of thought in them which show Browning's own bias toward a philosophy of evolution?

If they are not all entirely dramatic, which single poem would you instance as reflecting most nearly the poet's own standpoint?

Which do you consider presents the most developed point of view?

III. *Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study.*
Form and Ornamentation.

Hints: — All these poems are in monologue form, though they differ considerably in the manner of presentation. "Caliban," for example, gives directly the thoughts of the speaker, and only these, but without any explicit description of his life. An excellent idea of the way he spends his time is revealed by means of the illustrations which he uses. These illustrations, therefore, serve three purposes: to make

clear his thought, to give a glimpse of his way of living, and to show that his conception of Setebos is the result of his own experiences. In "Saul" the action is not present, as it is in "Caliban," but David gives a description of an event that has happened to him, telling what he himself had done and felt, what Abner had said, how Saul had looked, what he did, and so on, always using the indirect method of presenting the thought. In "Cleon" the action is present again; we follow him as he writes his letter to Protus, in the course of which we get not only Cleon's thoughts, but frequent glimpses of the thoughts of Protus by means of Cleon's answers, and furthermore, owing to the nature of the questions put by Protus, we get a complete view of Cleon's personality; again, by means of the illustrations introduced, we get a complete picture of the scene. Is there any word of direct description of the scene, or is it in every instance introduced as the accompaniment of a thought? "An Epistle" bears somewhat the same sort of relation to "Cleon," artistically, as "Saul" does to "Caliban." Although we follow Karshish as he writes his letter, the action is past instead of present, because he tells of an event that has happened to him. Do we learn as much about the personality of Karshish as we do about that of Cleon? Is any glimpse gained of the personality of Abib, to whom he is writing? Do we get as explicit a picture of the conditions under which the letter is being written as in "Cleon"? Of what present events is a view given?

In "A Death in the Desert" the speaker does not reveal himself at all; he is little more than the mouthpiece for the document of Pamphylax. The document gives an account of the scene of John's

death and of what he said on his death-bed. But there is the complexity so often seen in Browning's monologues, through John's imagining the arguments of the doubters, so that there are really two lines of thought carried on in the poem.

Notice that the little the speaker in the poem has to say is put in brackets. How much do his remarks bear upon the arguments of the poem? What Pamphylax says is printed direct, except when he is quoting his own past remarks. All that John says is quoted, all that his imagined opponents say is single quoted. Is there anything at all given of the occasion and surroundings of the speaker? What is given of the occasion of Pamphylax's relation of the story? Does the whole scene in the desert come out through the direct description of Pamphylax, or is some of it brought out in the course of John's talk? "Rabbi Ben Ezra" is the simplest of the monologues. It might be called a lyrical expression of the mood of the Rabbi, by means of which we discover his attitude toward life and God. Is there either action or scene portrayed, or any hint of any other personality? In "Blougram," again, a situation in the present is depicted. The Bishop does all the actual talking, but a clear idea of the remarks of Mr. Gigadibs may be gathered from the Bishop's replies to him. Is the manner of the poem more like "Cleon" than it is like that of any of the others under consideration? Point out the resemblances. "Christmas-Eve" comes under another head again. The speaker tells of an adventure he had, and of the visions he had in the midst of it. The scene, the visions, the thought, and *the emotions* are all presented by means of direct description, and the only direct actor in the poem is the

speaker, and all the action he tells about is past. "Easter-Day" is different again. There are two speakers in it, one talking directly, the other talking in quotation marks, so that, instead of getting the other personality through the answers of the speaker in the poem, as in "Blougram" and "Cleon," we get them by means of exact quotation of his remarks. To which of the other poems is it the nearest approach in form?

The structure of these poems does not offer any difficulties. "Caliban," "Cleon," "An Epistle," "A Death in the Desert," and "Blougram" are all in blank verse. Does this include all that are most dramatic in general treatment? In which of these is the blank verse most regular, and in which is it least regular? Does alliteration play any considerable part in the effect produced in these poems? Is tone gained chiefly by the character of the language rather than through the structure of the verse? In "Caliban," for example, the especial peculiarity of language is the use of the third person for the first. Now, while Caliban does not get a very satisfactory religious doctrine out of his observation of nature, he certainly makes his observations with acuteness, and expresses them in picturesque and vivid language. This might not seem fitting to a savage intellect, but an examination of savage myths will reveal the fact that savages were very acute observers of natural phenomena, that they clothed their observations in metaphorical and symbolic language which often attained great poetic beauty. As instances of this we may mention the Polynesian myth of "The Separation of Rangi and Papa" to be found in Tylor's "Primitive Culture," and the North American Indian tale of the "Red

Swan" given by Schoolcraft. Are Caliban's observations of nature true to natural history? For example, do fishes get frozen in wedges of ice and afterwards escape into the warm water, and do crabs march in a procession down to the sea? Naturally, Caliban uses no allusions that do not come within the immediate range of his observation. Does Shakespeare's Caliban use language equally remarkable for poetic beauty?

In "Cleon" the language everywhere suggests the life and culture of Greece. Observation of nature, pure and simple, is at a discount. Everything is refined upon, as the woman with the crocus vest that refines upon the women of Cleon's youth. Do you find any exception to the fact that his illustrations are drawn from the realm of man's artistic efforts? In his contrasting of animals with man, his observation is that of the scientist rather than that of the lover of nature, is it not? What does he say, however, to show that he has an appreciation of nature, though it is not his chief delight? His chief delight is the beauty of young and active manhood and beautiful womanhood. Is not the language of art and science combined with admiration of human beauty thoroughly characteristic of Grecian civilization, and does it not as surely give the tone to this poem as Caliban's nature illustrations do? Point out all the poetical comparisons used by Cleon, and show from what aspects of life he draws them. Is his language on the whole as full of images as Caliban's? Are the allusions all such as belong of necessity to his time? (For allusions, see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Notes, p. 297.)

In "An Epistle" the references are nearly all strictly in line with the profession of Karshish, and so illustrative of the particular phase of medical science

practised at that time that they cannot be understood without special explanations. (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Notes, p. 283.) Is the talk very full of images otherwise, or chiefly noticeable for its directness?

Notice that in "A Death in the Desert" references to secular learning of any kind are almost entirely absent. There are, however, references to Pagan religion. Point these out. Notice, also, that while much of the language is simple and direct, it breaks out now and then into some glowing gem of language like that in lines 204 and 205, —

" But shudderingly, scarce a shred between
Lie bare to the universal prick of light."

Like Cleon, Blougram is a cultured man, but the things mentioned by Cleon are few in comparison with those mentioned by Blougram. His language is full of references to history, art, literature, ancient and modern. His remarks about himself show him to be surrounded with luxury, with feminine adoration, — to have unlimited power and influence, in fact. Aside from this richness of reference, observe the figures used, and compare the poem with Karshish and Cleon in this respect. (For allusions see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Notes, p. 295.)

The remaining poems are all rhymed. "Saul" is in rhymed couplets, except at a few points in the poem, where there is a rhymed triplet introduced. The rhythm flows easily, with six beats to the line, the normal foot being anapæstic. Still greater ease is given by the fact that the stanzas vary in length, and frequently end with part of a line, the next stanza taking up the rest of the line and often completing the

rhymed couplet. "Rabbi Ben Ezra" has a more complicated stanza, — two rhymed couplets of three feet each, iambic, separated by a six-foot line that rhymes with a last seven-foot line. "Christmas-Eve" and "Easter-Day" have four beats to the line, with various arrangements of short syllables and rhymes, so that the effect of the verse is lively, and possibly not quite so dignified as the subject demands. What do you think? Whatever lack there may be in the structure of the verse is, however, counteracted by the diction and style, which passes from the humorous description full of lifelikeness of the congregation in the little chapel to the chaste reticence and power in the presentation of the vision.

If there are any differences in the internal structure of the verse, that is, in the varying of short syllables and rhymes to agree with the changes in mood, note them. "Easter-Day," Mr. Arthur Symonds says, "like its predecessor, is written in lines of four beats each, but the general effect is totally dissimilar. Here the verse is reduced to its barest constituents; every line is, syllabically as well as accentually, of equal length; and the lines run in pairs, without one double rhyme throughout. The tone and contents of the two poems (though also in a sense derived from the same elements) are in similar contrast. 'Easter-Day,' despite a momentary touch or glimmer, here and there, of grave humour, is thoroughly serious in manner and continuously solemn in subject." These poems differentiate themselves from all the others in this group, through their imaginative and symbolical quality. "Saul" toward the end touches the same sort of imaginative ecstasy (show how), but David's vision does not reach the vivid objective presentation of

those in the two later poems. There are many interesting allusions in the two poems, for explanation of which see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., Notes, pp. 400, 404. Contrast the way in which they are brought in with their use in the other poems.

A study of the effects of alliteration will be found interesting in connection with the rhymed group. In making comparisons notice that appreciation of nature is as much an attribute of David as it is of Caliban, but his appreciation smacks of pastoral rather than savage life, and includes human life in its vision, and furthermore is infused with the fervor of the joy of living instead of the fear of the joy of living. The chief ornaments of this poem are the lyrical outbursts in song of David. For opinions as to their truthfulness to the time, see *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. IV., Notes, p. 376. Point out all references and figures of speech which add to the beauty of the diction. Compare the nature of the language used by "Rabbi Ben Ezra." Does the nature of the references and illustrations in this group of rhymed poems determine the tone of the poem as much as it does in the group of blank-verse poems?

Queries for Discussion. — In how many ways can you trace the influence of Shakespeare's Caliban on Browning's "Caliban"?

"Saul" has been considered by some critics to be the finest single poem of Browning's. Mr. Symons remarks: "Indeed it seems to unite almost every poetic gift in consummate and perfect fusion: music, song, the beauty of nature, the joy of life, the glory and greatness of man, the might of love, human and divine: all these are set to an orchestral accompaniment of magnificent continuous harmony, now

hushed as the wind among the woods at evening, now strong and sonorous as the storm-wind battling with the mountain pine." Though the poem may be worthy all this praise, do you feel that there are other poems in this group finer, because more absolutely original in treatment?

Do you think the artistic force of "A Death in the Desert" somewhat weakened by the complicated series of speakers? or do you think it an artistic device to place John in perspective, so surrounding him in mystery, at the same time that there is a direct line of connection with the present speaker?

Would not "Bishop Blougram" preserve its artistic unity better if the poet had not added those explanatory stanzas at the end?

Does it seem like an apology on the poet's part for having drawn the Bishop in such uncomplimentary colors, and an attempt to shift the blame upon Gigadibs, by insinuating that he was not worth a better argument? If this were true, would it be better or worse for the Bishop?

From the study of these poems do you get an impression of the power and variety of Browning's genius?

THE PRELATE

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The Monsignor in "Pippa Passes," iv.	i	177	317
The Nuncio in "The Return of the Druses," v.	iii	1	293
Ogniben in "A Soul's Tragedy," ii.	iii	257	332
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Abate Paul, Canon Girolamo, the Archbishop, Caponsacchi, and the Pope in "The Ring and the Book," x.	vi	163	353
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Topic for Paper, Classwork, or Private Study. —
 Browning's Prelates : A Character Study.

Hints: — Before bringing his first prelate on the stage in "Pippa Passes," Browning lets us know from Pippa how highly he was thought of, and then from Bluphocks how lightly he was regarded. Moreover, Bluphocks not only casts doubt upon him, but implicates him in the plot against Pippa. Pippa's words (Introduction, lines 62-68 and 181-186) reflect that class of public opinion which takes the holiness of an exalted prelate for granted; but those of Bluphocks (Part II. lines 329-370) represent public opinion no more trustworthy, — that of a class of sceptics as ready to distrust a priest because his profession is holiness as the pious are to assume him to be good because of it. Should either be accepted? Does the poet give these two points of view to awaken curiosity and interest in

an independent scrutiny of the character himself when he appears? But notice that he makes Bluphocks give a clew to the plot which may be taken as a fact although it comes through a scoundrel. Does Bluphocks rightly implicate the priest in it?

As the Bishop bows his attendants out, the extreme politeness and, especially, the humility of his saying that he chiefly desires life now that he may recompense them, seem a little dubious. Is he too condescending? Does he mean it? And the addition, spoken aside, "Most I know something of already," may indicate a system of spying on them, and that he has such a conception of his duty to his office as Shakespeare makes Angelo have in "Measure for Measure," — to ferret out evil and punish the sinner, instead of rescuing the sinned against. Or is this a hit at the Intendant? Is the Monsignor an abstemious man, or is there any reason to suspect him of forced asceticism? (lines 4, 23-25, 119-121). Why do you think the Intendant is "bashful" about taking the "dainties"? (See also l. 68.) Does he feel uneasy, and have his own slippery deeds made him so, or his fear of the Bishop's capacity in the same line? Maybe he has noticed the Sicilian's surprise that a repast has been prepared, and thought the remark was intended to forestall a fear that there was any intention to poison him. But is this likely at the date of the play? (The references to Prince Metternich and Austrian tyranny permit an approximation of the date.) Is it a revelation of the Bishop's character that his talk flows so affably on, between his thrusts at the Intendant, in picturesque descriptions of midsummer heat at Messina, and in dissertations, à propos of Jules, on the prospects for a new school of art? What do

you gather from the talk otherwise as to the Bishop's antecedents and character and his intentions toward sin and the particular sinner before him? When the Intendant, shrewdly suspecting that the Bishop is not averse to profiting by the crimes he means to make a virtue of detecting and punishing, checkmates him by saying that it has happened in this case, as in all the old stories, that the child was not killed, but is ready to produce (171-177), notice the effect on the Bishop. Does the Intendant's rejoinder betoken that his lordship was choleric and tried to strike him? Does this justify the Intendant in thinking his guess right, that the Bishop is not anxious to be assured of the child's safety? What is his reason for letting the Bishop know that Carlo of Cesena is in the secret too, and has been blackmailing him? In which speech is the Monsignor's real feeling betrayed, where he cries, "Liar!" or, "I would you spoke truth for once"? Does the Intendant judge rightly as to his secret desire to appear good without really being so, in his final proposition? Does Pippa's song expose the Bishop's true aspiration toward righteousness? Or does it actually warm into life a tendency to be as good as he appears, which was but latent before? Notice Pippa's final remark upon the Bishop (lines 272-280). Does her insight throw the right light on his character?

In comparison with this Bishop, does the Nuncio of "The Return of the Druses" show a greater or less insincerity in his professions of love for his sheep? Is it due to his greater danger that he is so much keener-witted, or is his nature both stronger in fibre and more frankly material in its secret desires and in its assumption of mastery over the people, than that of the Monsignor? Notice Djabal's previous knowl-

edge of him as Luke of Stamboul (lines 166, 210), and what this implies. Also his purchase of the Prefectship (32-40), and his use of the dead Prefect's sunken treasure ship, containing the price he himself had brought him, into a means to win over the uninitiated Druses by giving them to understand they were intended as the gift of the Church to them. His mind dwells on those bezants. Notice his idea of a miracle (184). But the situation was desperate, as his own account of it shows (20-30); and the mutter among the Orientals hemming him in — "Tear him!" brings out his powers of mind in defence against their merely physical advantage over him. When he finds how effective his bluff "Ye dare not," etc., is, does he weaken or strengthen our admiration of his pluck by taking the opposite tack — "Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye tear me! Shall I," etc. Does his silence when new persons or new events come into calculation, and his instant seizure of any hint about them that may be turned to his advantage, reveal an unusual combination of powers, — caution and astuteness with alertness and adroitness? Exemplify this.

Is there any sign in the Nuncio of the art-loving tastes of the Monsignor? His utter worldliness, his hard-headedness about the supernatural, are his strong points. Notice that his last speech is the confident challenge to Djabal to exalt himself. This comes, too, after Anael's death, which has not shaken him for an instant. Does this distinguish him from the Monsignor, again, whose half-and-half virtue is his weak point? He is much less confidently worldly than the Nuncio, and is capable of being frightened emotionally, as it were, while a physical fright, fear for

his life, and concern for the loss of both bezants and bishopric are what wring the heart of the Nuncio.

Ogniben is not put in a situation which brings out his own secret foibles, but in one which makes use of his characteristic combination of affability and shrewdness to bring out the secret foibles of Chiappino. He knows beforehand that the Prefect is not killed, and he has been informed, too, as to who really dealt the blow, so he has to manage Chiappino, whose principles he has reason to suspect, with reference to another man of worth, Luitolfo, whom he does not fear, and he acquits himself of his task, both with relation to them and to the Church he serves, with insight, tact, and intelligence. He consciously brings to light all Chiappino's lurking infidelity, as Pippa unconsciously wakens all the allegiance to good lying dormant in the Monsignor's pious intentions. Show how ably he does this. But, after all, does his success depend at bottom on Chiappino himself? Would Ogniben show to as good advantage if he had a sincere character to grapple with? The quality in him that is not exalted, and which would be detected, one may guess, if he had to deal with a revolter whom he could not add to his list of "three-and-twenty leaders of revolts," is his disbelief in disinterestedness. Would he not appear as much at a disadvantage as Braccio, for example, if he had a Luria to bring to justice? He is unable to conceive of liberty as anything but a pretext for self-aggrandizement, and he is as sceptical about disinterestedness as the Nuncio is about Druse miracles.

The Bishop who builds his tomb at St. Praxed's Church agrees with the Monsignor of "Pippa Passes" in his artistic tastes; and the Nuncio is a boor, compared to him, in love of material advantage. His joy

in beauty is so thoroughly sensuous, so utterly unaware of the existence of such a thing as inward beauty in art, that he is like a child beside his sophisticated fellow-prelates, and represents a stage of unconsciousness of self so undeveloped that it can only be compared with that of the evangelical parish-priest in "The Inn Album" (Part IV. lines 240-415), who, although so opposite to him in any æsthetic capacity as in any similarity of outward environment, is scarcely more crude in knowledge of himself. The arrested development of the uncultured evangelical English clergyman of the present century and the unawakenedness of the cultured Italian prelate of the Renaissance are equally ugly in character, from a spiritual point of view; although one may justly take more pleasure in the Italian than the Englishman, because he is a natural product of an early stage of European civilization, while the Englishman is an unnatural growth, thwarting the legitimate progress of modern life.

There is, however, little insincerity or doubleness of aim in either of them. They have the virtue of primitive types. The man whose moral possibilities are awakening can be more of a hypocrite or a potential villain than one who has not yet reached the transitional phase where choice begins to be consciously taken and villany or virtue may result. There is one token that the Bishop feels guilty. He hesitates over telling how to find the buried lump of *lapis lazuli* secretly saved when his church was on fire (lines 33-50). Does this suggest the necessity for caution merely, or does his conscience trouble him a little? Are there any other such signs of uneasiness? (3-9.) The mixture of Bible phrase with Pagan emblems sometimes suggests not only that his mind naturally betrays

the Pagan taste belonging to an Italian, but also that he covers his greater delight in the latter with a pose in the professional line expected of him.

The desire to get the better of a rival, to excite envy, and occupy a place of power and importance in public opinion, is the impulse that moves Bishop Blougram to make his apology as it moved the Bishop of St. Praxed's to make his dying requests. What other similarities of character are there between the two men? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Introduction, pp. xviii and xix.) In sophistication, brain-power, materialism, and adroitness, Bishop Blougram is a Nuncio raised to the highest power; and in affability, fluency, and social gifts, as well as in his scepticism toward disinterestedness, he is a cooler hand than Ogniben. Nevertheless, in just the fact that Gigadibs's criticism of his sincerity makes him as desirous to subjugate him as the Bishop of St. Praxed's was to get the better of old Gandolf in his grave and torture him with envy, the poet lets us discern — through his uneasiness of conscience about this — the weak point in his character, and also the shifting of the moral ideals of the nineteenth century, which the Bishop vaguely feels, towards a genuine love of man and against such claims as his for personal power, luxury, and rank.

Is Gigadibs the nonentity he is commonly supposed to be? Or is he very important to the poem in the light he throws on its purport? Notice that he is represented as being led to action of an unexpected kind by this talk. And how do you deem the fact should be interpreted, as a comment on the Bishop's argument and character, that, instead of sitting with Blougram "this many a year," as the Bishop thinks

he will, he does "not sit five minutes" (lines 1005-1014), being seized with a "sudden healthy vehemence" to put into practice in a new world a simpler way of life, in closer accord with the last chapter of St. John?

Does this imply that the Christianity the Bishop professes is opposed, in its exaltation of favored persons to material comfort and prominence, to the social ardor and ministry to others which was Christ's last bidding to his disciples in that chapter?

The Churchmen whose characters are more or less fully portrayed in "The Ring and the Book" may be best seen, first, from the standpoint of the chief and wisest one of them, the Pope. Then the accounts given of them elsewhere in the poem from other points of view may be collected and compared with his; especially those of Caponsacchi given by himself, in Part VI., and Pompilia, in Part VII., both of him and of the others.

The Pope characterizes the Abate as a fox, "all craft but no violence;" the young Canon Girolamo, as the "hybrid," neither fox nor wolf, "neither craft nor violence wholly;" the Archbishop as a knight enfeebled by the gold and silk of the Church's favor, who, instead of championing the victim, took part with the wolf against her. His judgment of them all is based upon his own conception of the shepherd's proper office being to feed the sheep, and disregard the lust and pride of life. From disheartenment over their moral failure he turns with cheer to Caponsacchi's "use of soldiership, self-abnegation, freedom from all fear, loyalty." Is his view of all these Churchmen just? Is his stern, unbiassed judgment *against* those he so grieves, for the sake of the Church,

especially to condemn, a high proof of his own disinterestedness? Notice, also, that he has to face some scandal against the Church he honors to defend Caponsacchi, and *not* to let off Guido. "Religion's parasite" he calls him. Is his reprimand of Caponsacchi a moral weakening on his part from the high stand he has taken; or is it sincere and natural from his clerical point of view? Notice, too, that he has no idea of the purity of love for a priest, but is again true to his clerical ideals in praising Caponsacchi for resisting love (ll. 1164-1187). In what respects does he over-praise and under-praise Caponsacchi? (See *Camberwell Browning*, Vol. V., Introductory Essay, p. xxx, and compare with Caponsacchi's own account of his action and motives.)

Not only in his sentence of Guido is the Pope's fidelity to what he thinks right attested. He is above bias and seeks truth outside the pale of ecclesiasticism, reviewing the past and forecasting the future in quest of truth. Yet, despite his fears lest it was the world's enmity that gave the early Christians their spiritual insight and vigor, and that the world's approval of the Church as an established institution deadens the ardor of her sons for virtue and tends to make the politic and thrifty seem to them the only wisdom (ll. 1821-1831); despite the suspicion that the natural man has it in him to exceed in virtue any "warmth by law and light by rule" (ll. 1527-1550); despite his foreboding that in an age to come there may be a few able to reach an unauthoritative truth and "correct the portrait by the living face, man's God, by God's God in the mind of man;" despite all these undaunted adventurings of a brave mind, a pure and disinterested love of the truth, the Pope does

not for an instant question his own duty and prerogative as the head of the Church to smite with all his authority the wrong he sees (ll. 1950-1954).

In Browning's last book, "Asolando," companion sketches of two prelates appear, — one as wily and yet almost as naively hypocritical in his self-seeking as the Nuncio, and the other as true-hearted as the Pope of "The Ring and the Book." But is this Pope of "The Bean-Feast" as acute and subtle as Antonio Pignatelli? How do you derive from this short poem that he was simple-minded and lovable? And from the other lightly written piece, how is it that you gather an impression of the hit being against the people who were disarmed from cavil at the fisherman's origin by his external humility, rather than against the humor-loving Pope who saw through them?

Queries for Discussion. — What effect would a song of Pippa's have to deter the Nuncio of "The Return of the Druses" from a profitable tacit assent to a crime?

Was Browning true to nature in portraying in the Monsignor a man who could be swayed by Pippa's song?

Would the Pope of "The Ring and the Book" approve of Bishop Blougram? Judged by this Pope's idea of the Church as the embodiment of the rule, that "Man is born nowise to content himself, but please God," which of these prelates would deserve his commendation?

Is this Pope alone enough to justify the priesthood for all the slurs its unworthy members cast upon it? Or does he rather justify human nature, which can be so sound and genuine that neither hierarchy nor partisanship can bend it from the love of the truth?





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